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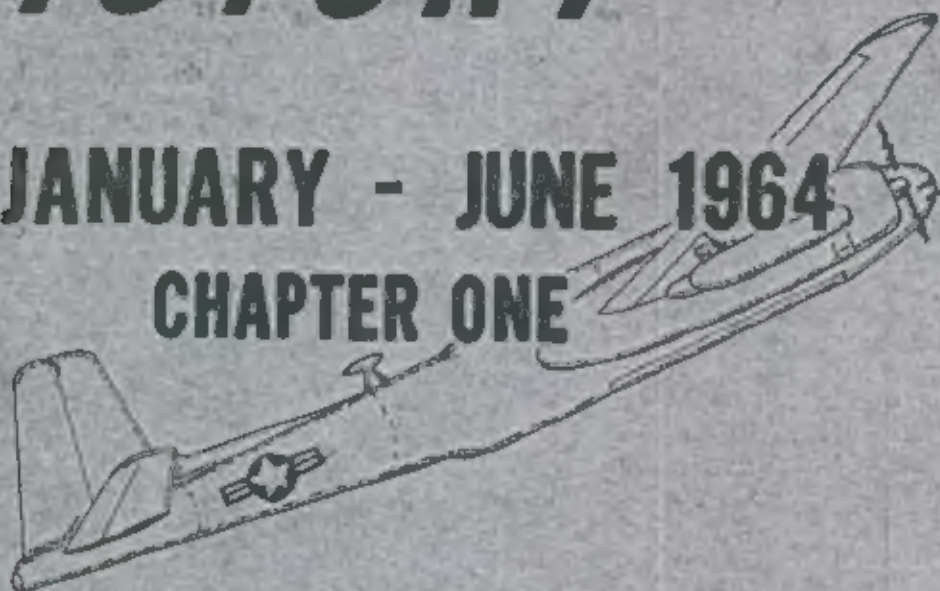


**2<sup>D</sup> AIR DIVISION**

# ***HISTORY***

**JANUARY - JUNE 1964**

**CHAPTER ONE**



**"ORGANIZATION FOR THE AIR WAR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA"**

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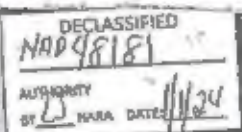
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History, 2d Air Division

January-June 1964

Chapter I

"Organization for the Air War in Vietnam"

Prepared by Kenneth Sams,  
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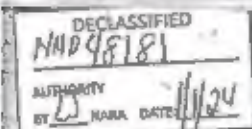
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## FOREWORD

This chapter is the first of four portraying the role of the U.S. Air Force in the counterinsurgency effort in the Republic of Vietnam. It covers the developing organization of air power in Vietnam in 1964, to meet the ever changing needs of the counterinsurgency environment as well as the changing strategic pattern in explosive Southeast Asia.

Other chapters in this series which will make up the history of the 2d Air Division for the first half of 1964, deal with air operations, logistic support, and lessons learned in counterinsurgency operations. Although these four chapters are mainly concerned with the January-June 1964 period, background material going back to 1962 has been included in many areas.

Assisting the historian in preparation of this volume were three airmen who helped out considerably in research, typing, and administration. These were TSgt. Robert Young, SSgt. Frank A. Green, and A1C Richard Ljung. The writer also wishes to thank the many personnel in the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, and the 2d Air Division who were most cooperative in providing necessary material.

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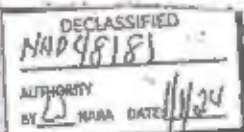
## CHAPTER I

ORGANIZATION FOR THE AIR WAR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

In its third year in Southeast Asia, the 2d Air Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Joseph H. Moore, Jr., was more committed than ever to a war that showed signs of continuing for several years. Faced with a determined enemy who had developed a sophistication in insurgent tactics that rivalled the Air Force's sophistication in air operations, the 2d AD was employing weapons and tactics limited by strict ground rules in support of the Republic of Vietnam's pacification plan. At the same time, the command was carrying out its first significant aerial operations outside the borders of Vietnam as its aircraft flew over Laos in May and June at the request of the Laotian Government. [New aircraft,] new installations in RVN and Thailand, [and an increase in personnel for 2d AD indicated an increased appreciation of the role of air in counterinsurgency operations and in support of general US strategy for Southeast Asia.]

With an election coming up in the United States and with the new government of Vietnam still trying to find its feet, the Viet Cong in 1964, backed by support from North Vietnam and China, was pressing hard with attacks of up to two-battalion strength. The tempo of the war had increased sharply since the November 1963 and January 1964 coups. The number of regular enemy VC's was estimated at 32,000, more than twice the strength in 1961, when attacks were mainly of a sporadic terrorist nature. Increased VC activity and

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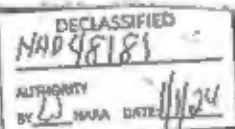
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his development of an effective anti-aircraft capability using up to .50 caliber weapons had substantially increased the number of US aircraft lost to hostile fire. It also shifted emphasis to the role of air which could be more effective against larger targets in Vietnam and as a vital back-up to the US in event of escalation.

The same limitations on the use of fixed wing aircraft which prevailed in 1961 continued into 1964. The US military role was still an "advisory" role. Unilateral strike operations in Vietnam were prohibited. No strikes could be made without Vietnamese Air Force personnel aboard. Identification of targets was a careful procedure which had to be carried out by Vietnamese personnel. There was a political restriction on the type of aircraft which would be employed. USAF operations often had to be carried out in conjunction with US Army air operations which were not all under the same central control. The enemy's sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia were safe from air attack. And most important, perhaps, the air role had to be fitted into the overall counterinsurgency effort which placed much emphasis upon non-military activities, such as civic action and propaganda, as the means of ultimate victory.

Several major developments in late 1963 and 1964 had a decided impact upon the role of the Air Force in the Vietnamese struggle. The overthrow of the Diem regime in November 1963 and the subsequent coup in January 1964 generated changes in the direction of the war. Following the second coup, there emerged the Chien Thang National Pacification Plan, based on previous plans employing the Malaya-

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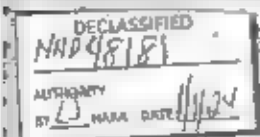
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tested "spot of oil" concept. The general US feeling was that the new regime and its more aggressive approach to victory was more in keeping with US policies on how to conduct the war. Plans for reducing US military strength in Vietnam were reversed as the war tempo increased. In the Spring of 1964, the 2d AD faced a critical problem of air resources. The B-26's were grounded and the F-26's were showing signs of strain. There was a short critical period before the more effective A-1E's arrived as replacements when the USAF striking power was down to eight aircraft. Another development affecting the air role was a major reorganization of the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. The reorganization, among other things, eliminated the MAAG function. Several directives emanating from Washington held out hope that the problem of coordination of the US Army and USAF air roles would be resolved. Command of both 2d AD and the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, changed hands in the first half of 1964. Perhaps the most significant development in the first half of 1964 which influenced the USAF role was the extension of the war beyond the borders of South Vietnam in response to the growing crisis in Laos in May and June.

#### The USAF Establishment in Southeast Asia

When Major General Joseph H. Moore assumed command of the 2d Air Division on 31 January 1964, he inherited an organization relatively unchanged in basic structure from what it was in 1962. As a subordinate commander to the commander of 13th Air Force, his job was to maintain assigned and attached forces at a degree of combat readiness to insure the success of 13th AF military operations. As

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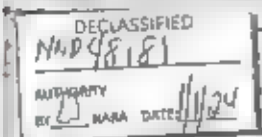
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the Air Force Component Commander under the Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, his prime job was to assist, train, and augment the Vietnamese Air Force in their war against the Viet Cong.) Also, since the Commander USMACV, was also the Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Thailand, (USMACTHAI) General Moore acted as Air Force Component Commander for USMACTHAI. If the proposed United States Forces, Southeast Asia (USSEASIA) were activated General Moore would be its AFCC, also. <sup>1.</sup>

General Moore had under his control four groups in Vietnam and one in Thailand. At Tan Son Nhut, Saigon, he controlled the 33rd Tactical Group and the 315th Troop Carrier Group (attached). At Bien Hoa, about 18 miles north of Saigon, he commanded the 34th Tactical Group with its 1st Air Commando Squadron. About 350 miles to the north of Saigon, he controlled Da Nang, where the 23rd Air Base Group and one squadron of the 315th TCG were based. In Thailand at Don Muang near Bangkok, General Moore had the 35th Tactical Group which had support squadrons at Taklii, Ubon, and Korat. In addition to these units, there were several support squadrons and detachments at other key bases in Vietnam. <sup>2.</sup>

When it started the year, the 2d AD was operating T-28s, B-26s, and C-123s, all old veterans in need of replacement. The T-28 carried about 1500 pounds of bombs in varying mixes, rockets, napalm, and two .50 cal. pods of 350 rounds per gun. Thirteen T-28's were authorized in the 1st Air Commando Squadron. Eighteen B-26's were authorized for the 1st ACS, 14 strike versions and four reconnaissance. The strike B-26's carried an ordnance load of 5,000 pounds

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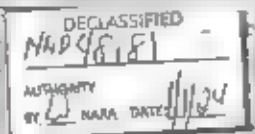
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internal and external of the same type carried by the T-28. Three squadrons comprising 49 C-123's were assigned to the 315th TCG under operational control of the 2d AD. These carried loads of 10,000 pounds or 50 combat equipped troops. In addition to these basic aircraft, the command had six C-47's assigned to the 1st ACS for airlift, four U-10B's with the 1st ACS mainly for psych war and 22 TO-1D's with the Bien Hoa based 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron for forward air control, combat support liaison, visual reconnaissance. In jet aircraft, the 2d AD controlled six RF-101's based at Tan Son Nhut, two RB-57's, also at Tan Son Nhut, six F-100's at Takli, Thailand, and four F-102's at Don Muang, Thailand. <sup>3.</sup>

The pattern of Air Force operations in Vietnam as it entered its third year was briefly this. USAF Combat Advisory sorties were flown by the 1st Air Command Squadron at Bien Hoa in B-26 and T-28 "Farmgate" aircraft. Although the number of aircraft committed to this program suffered a drastic reduction later in the year, a total of 31 were available in January. Farmgate aircraft, piloted by USAF personnel, but with a VNAF member aboard, responded to frag orders from the AOC in Tan Son Nhut with close support strikes against VC concentrations, pre-strike and air cover of heliborne operations and train, truck, and boat convey escort. <sup>4.</sup> In 1963, Farmgate aircraft averaged over 650 sorties a month. From January 1962 through May 1964, Farmgate aircraft flew 12,587 sorties out of a total of 31,696 flown by USAF and VNAF aircraft. <sup>5.</sup>

The 22 TO-1D liaison planes of the 19th TASS, which arrived in the theater in July 1963, started operations in September and in

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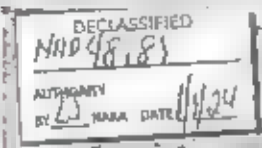
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December, flew 1308 sorties for the month. Before these USAF planes arrived, the VNAF's three L-19 squadrons were carrying the entire Forward Air Control and Combat Liaison load, averaging about 2200 a month in 1963. With the arrival of the USAF squadron, the number of VNAF sorties flown dropped from its peak, which, of course, was not the U.S. intention. To reverse this trend, a program was started to put half the TO-1D effort into a transition program for VNAF pilots and a VNAF observer training program at Bien Hoa, to give them the pilot training necessary for their new liaison squadron.<sup>6</sup> From September 1963 through May 1964, 9818 USAF liaison sorties were flown.<sup>7</sup>

The USAF also flew convoy escort and helicopter escort missions using T-28's and B-26's. These were sporadic in number reflecting the number of requests received. Although practically all requirements were met, the Vietnamese were requesting escort on only about 25% of their trains in 1963. When escort planes were overhead, the VC rarely attacked. In 1963, 2388 convoy escort missions were flown by USAF/VNAF aircraft. In the same year 1245 helicopter escort missions were flown by USAF/VNAF aircraft, which gave top priority to this type mission. Since US Army helicopters were used considerably on these missions, frequently in conjunction with VNAF/USAF escort, a problem was created in planning and coordination and in keeping track of different radio frequencies. Tactics had to be adjusted to allow the HU-1's to stay in close while Air Force planes swooped overhead, in front of, and alongside the formation.<sup>8</sup>

Photo recon sorties, flown mainly by RF-101, RB-57, and RB-26 aircraft, averaged about 165 a month in 1963, with the RF-101 accounting

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for about two-thirds of the 1977 sorties flown during the year. Because of the seasonal weather in RVN, there was an average of about 100 outstanding requests at any given time. The increased USAF commitment resulting from the crisis in Laos later in the year increased this photo recon effort. This will be covered elsewhere in this history. The USAF flew the jets on these recon missions but the use of the RB-26 was exclusively Vietnamese. 9.

Night flare and strike support of outposts and "new life" rural villages became an increasing part of the over all USAF effort in 1964. Beginning in June 1963, there was a sharp upsurge in the number of these missions flown as the VC began increased night attacks. USAF C-123's and VNAF C-47's shared the night flare mission role. Every night, at least one of the C-47's or C-123's was on airborne alert with another standing by to take over when the airborne plane was committed. Fighters were also on airborne alert at night. In the week following the November coup, as many as 18 requests for air support were received in one night. The VC usually broke off their attacks when flare or strike aircraft arrived. In November 1963, 284 flare ship and 298 strike plane missions were flown, the highest for the year, dropping to 176 flare and 76 strikes in December. 10.

Psychological warfare missions were flown primarily by USAF U-10's, but VNAF C-47's, L-19's and L-20's, were also used. It was the objective of the USAF here, as with liaison flights, to get the VNAF to do more in this area. Missions were mainly speaker and leaflet drop combinations. In 1963, 805 psych war missions were flown. Significantly, the busiest month was October 1963,

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the month before the coup, when 162 missions were flown. <sup>11.</sup>

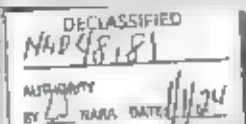
Another important type mission which was becoming increasingly important was the Ranch Hand, or defoliation type mission. Three C-123's of the 315th Troop Carrier Group were committed to this highly dangerous mission in which dense foliage areas near roads, railroads, rivers and canals, were cleared by herbicidal sprays made at altitudes as low as 300 feet. Because of heavy VC ground fire in the Delta, night spraying was without flares. On 23 December, on a mission without flares, light ground fire but no hits were experienced. On 26 December, the second night of the test, both spray aircraft were hit although flares were not used. <sup>12.</sup>

Probably the most extensive Air Force mission was the air-lift support mission. These were flown by 49 aircraft based at Da Nang and Tan Son Nhut but operating into some 95 different airfields and some 66 different drop zones throughout Vietnam. In 1963, C-123's of the 315th TCG flew 24,584 sorties carrying 46,255.5 tons of cargo and passengers. <sup>13.</sup>

To carry out its mission in Southeast Asia, the USAF had 4,484 military personnel assigned to five installations in Thailand and 13 installations in RVN. Another 873 military personnel were TDY in the theater. In addition the Air Force employed 1,025 civilian employees, of whom 19 were US civilians. <sup>14.</sup>

This briefly was the Air Force commitment in Vietnam as it entered its third year of operations. The weapons and tactics employed were dated, but they were being used to maximum effectiveness against the limitations imposed upon them by conditions in

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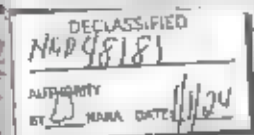
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Vietnam. Lost in combat in 1963 were seven B-26's, three T-28's, two C-47's, one C-123 and one TO-1D. A total of 25 aircraft were lost in the theater from all causes during the year. That VC anti-aircraft capabilities were improving was evident in the fact that there were 45 hits on USAF/VNAF aircraft by ground fire in 1962 compared with 390 hits in 1963. <sup>15</sup>

The 2d Air Division was only part of a massive US/Vietnamese military structure organized to fight the guerrilla war in Vietnam. On the US side, there were four other commands under MACV; the Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG), the US Army Support Command, Vietnam (USASC-V), the Headquarters Support Activity, Saigon, (HSAS), and the Task Element, U.S. Marine Corps. Apart from the 2d AD, the largest subordinate unit to MACV was the US Army Support Command, Vietnam. Included in USASC-V were three aviation battalions one assigned to II, III, and IV Corps and an aviation detachment assigned to I Corps. Each battalion consisted of two aviation companies. In addition, USASC-V had three aviation companies, a utility tactical transport helicopter company, and a special warfare aviation detachment. <sup>16</sup> There were 325 aircraft assigned to USASC-V at the beginning of 1964.

The Army air role in Vietnam was quite extensive. From 1962, when the first operations were flown until 31 January 1964, US Army aircraft flew a total of 198,173 sorties, of which 114,888 were combat sorties. Rotary wing aircraft flew twice as many sorties as fixed wing aircraft. In this period, Army aircraft sustained 657 hits by ground fire and 22 planes were shot down, with 20 crew personnel being

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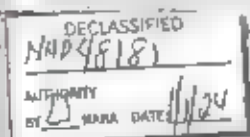
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killed in action and 126 wounded. Statistics on the Army air effort are given below: 17.

	<u>Fixed Wing</u>	<u>Rotary Wing</u>	<u>Total</u>
Aircraft Hits	227	430	657
Acraft Shot Down	7	15	22
Lost to Ground Fire	4	9	13
Lost to Other Causes	7	11	18
Wounded in Action	10	116	126
Killed in Action	5	15	20
Sorties flown	60,925	128,248	189,173
Combat Support Sorties	50,929	63,959	114,888
Passengers Lifted	114,429	172,655	287,084
Tons Cargo Carried	9,251	3,780	13,031
Flying Hours	58,100	59,694	117,794

The Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) at the beginning of the year had 29 T-28's of the fighter version and was in the process of getting 18 more for recon purposes. VNAF also had one squadron of 22 A-1H's and was programmed to activate a second squadron in February. The A-1H carried about 9000 pounds of ordnance plus four 20mm guns with 205 rounds per gun; however, the VNAF flew considerably under this load capability. VNAF also had two squadrons of C-47's, each with 17 aircraft, three squadrons of L-19's totaling 48 aircraft and two squadrons of H-34's comprising 24 aircraft. In addition, it has other craft for paywar, recon, and support purposes giving it a total of 219 aircraft. 18.

The Vietnamese ground military forces were divided into four corps. There were two infantry divisions in I Corps, three in II Corps, two in III Corps, and two in IV Corps, making a total of nine divisions. In addition corps commanders had assigned to them additional units, military and para-military, including ranger battalions, artillery units and Marine forces. 19.



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The Vietnamese naval structure consisted of four coastal districts, one for each corps area. These consisted primarily of junk divisions and river assault Groups.<sup>20.</sup>

In summary, as of 1 January 1964, arrayed against an estimated 32,000 "hard core" Viet Cong guerrillas and another 60,000 irregulars was a total of 212,308 Vietnamese Army, Navy and Air Force personnel supported by 15,989 American "advisory" personnel. Backing up the ground effort were 661 fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft. The US Air Force had 117 aircraft, the VNAF, 219 aircraft, and the US Army, 325 aircraft. \* [Although US Air Force aircraft strength had nearly doubled since January 1962, the USAF was still the smallest of the three air organizations in South Vietnam in 1964.<sup>21.</sup>

#### Limitations Upon COIN Activities in Vietnam

[There were several restrictions on the use of air power in the Vietnamese war which had to be strictly adhered to even though at times they were prejudicial to the proper exercise of the air capability. The 1954 Geneva treaty, although not signed by the US or the Republic of Vietnam, restricted the types of aircraft which could be employed, specifically stating that jet engines could not be introduced. Strict rules on "hot pursuit" restricted air operations against an enemy who was using the border countries of Laos and Cambodia as a sanctuary.] US pilots were not permitted to engage in unilateral offensive operations. [A Vietnamese airman had to be aboard aircraft on strike missions and even on such missions as night

\*The Royal Australian Air Force had eight Avon Sabres, at Ubon, Thailand and the Royal New Zealand Air Force had two Bristols at Korat, Thailand.

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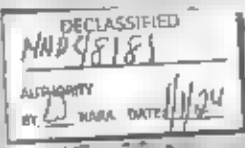
One example of the problem this created took place on 10 September 1963, at 0015 hours when the Soc Trang airfield was attacked by the Viet Cong using 81mm mortars. Four USAF pilots in two F-28's were airborne within five minutes after the first mortar shells hit. In the air, they notified the AOC of the attack and asked for a flare ship and additional fighters. They then expended ordnance on what they believed to be the VC mortar positions identified by what appeared to be missile flashes. This was done as the ARVN was retaliating with mortar and other fire. Immediately after the air attack the VC's withdrew.<sup>22</sup>

The commander of the 34th Tactical Group, whose F-28's were involved, commended the aggressive action of the USAF pilots in defending a base under attack. However, he pointed out that such an action was a violation of the rules of engagement since there were no FIM-49 crew members on board, no FAC or flare ship, and no way of positively identifying the target which was in an allegedly friendly area.<sup>23</sup>

In making this point, the 34th's commander noted that it was difficult to understand why certain rules had to be observed. In a COIN environment, he said, the rules of engagement are sensitive since there are usually no clearly drawn battle lines. The winner of a COIN war will probably be the side which wins over the people, he added, and it was possible that victory over a thousand of the enemy could be offset by the unintentional death of one of the friendly forces. He added:<sup>24</sup>

...We must exercise our best nature judgment

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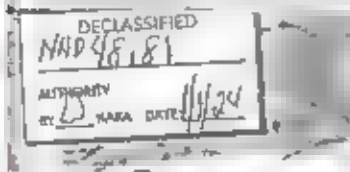
and restraint at all times and abide by the rules of the game. This is vital, even though in certain situations such as this case, it might appear that the proper course of action lies elsewhere... Take pride in accomplishing a difficult job under adverse conditions in a sane and professional manner.

Another case occurred on 5 December 1963, when Army helicopters supporting a II Corps outpost at night were reported to have fired on friendly forces in an attack made without positive identification of the VC target. The Commander, MACV, directed that corrective action be taken. He added: 25.

...It is also of concern that a possibility exists in which U.S. Pilots conducted indiscreet firing against ground targets without adequate knowledge of the ground force disposition, without communications with ground forces or the air control system, and without prior arrangement or briefing...

The basic ground rules for operations by US aircraft were laid down in November 1962, by MACV Directive Number 62. This stated that as a general policy, no missions would be undertaken using US personnel unless it is beyond the capability of the Vietnamese Air Force. The US objective was to give the Vietnamese the necessary training so that the VNAF could eventually perform all required missions. The use of Faragate aircraft for combat support missions would be only with a combined Vietnamese-American crew and these aircraft would carry VNAF markings. The C-123's would be US marked and manned by US crews for normal support missions but on combat support missions such as flare drops, the combined crew principle applied. Army and Marine aircraft would be US marked and manned but armament installed on these craft could be used for defensive purposes only. The US

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Army's Iroquois UH-1 and Mohawk (OV-1) aircraft would also be US marked and used offensively only after fired upon. <sup>26</sup>

MACV also placed restrictions on flying near the Cambodian border. No US aircraft in Vietnam were "normally" permitted to operate closer than three miles to the Cambodian border and then only when the ceiling was at least 1500 feet and visibility three miles or better. Where the border was clearly defined by physical landmarks, operational missions could be conducted to a point no closer than one mile to the border and at a minimum altitude of 2000 feet. At night, planes could operate no closer than 3 miles from Cambodia during periods of reduced visibility and only when under positive radar control. No US aircraft, without specific MACV authorization, could conduct combat missions more than two miles off the Vietnamese coast. Waivers to these border restrictions would be granted only with the utmost discretion and then only when the border could be unmistakably defined by visual reference. <sup>27</sup>

In March 1964, several changes were made to this MACV directive. Vietnamese crews were no longer required on missions flown by US marked unarmed reconnaissance aircraft, although they could be used on any mission which might be facilitated by the presence or assistance of members of the Vietnamese armed forces. This was something the 2d Air Division had requested for its EB-26 aircraft much earlier, but the change came too late, since, by the end of March, the EB-26's were out of action. With border flights, aircraft were not authorized to cross RVN borders "without diplomatic clearance obtained through the Air Attache, American Embassy, or the Embassy of the country

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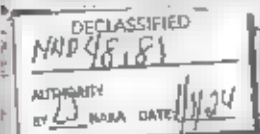
concerned,\* and even then, aircraft were not authorized to fire on or across the borders.\* Air support activities for border outposts (fire support, recon, transportation evaluation, supply) was authorized under the same conditions. 28.

The distances from the borders at which aircraft could normally operate were also changed. Where the border was determined by a river or vehicle route or if a river or a vehicle route was inside and along the border and located within 1000 meters of the border, the maximum operating limit of the aircraft was the river or vehicle route. In other areas, aircraft were limited to 2000 meters from the border when aircraft were directed by a forward air controller and 5000 meters when not directed by a forward controller. All aircraft had to stay south of an imaginary line parallel with and 5000 meters south of the Ben Hai river which separated North and South Vietnam. Restrictions on visual and photographic mission aircraft could be waived under certain MACV provisions. 29.

The question of joint American-Vietnamese crews on Farmgate aircraft was brought up in May 1964 when 2d AD was asked by the Chief of Staff, USAF, to explain its use of VNAF pilots on Farmgate missions. The 2d AD replied that since November 1962, VNAF pilots had not flown on Farmgate aircraft but that basic VNAF airmen were used for the task. A VNAF NCO had the job of scheduling and controlling basic airmen who stood by alert in the ready room adjacent to the 1st Air Command.

\*On 26 March 1964, a week after these instructions came out, two Cambodian T-28's fighters shot down an unarmed VNAF L-19 observation plane about 35 miles west of Saigon. The plane, carrying a Vietnamese Army captain and a USAF lieutenant pilot, crashed about four kilometers on the Vietnamese side of the Cambodian border. Both men were killed. In the operation in which the L-19 took part, VNAF planes mistakenly had bombed a village in Cambodia due to "map error and mistaken location."

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Squadron operations room. There were "infrequent" occasions when the non-availability of VNAF airmen required the cancellation or delay of a mission. The 2d AD pointed out that the presence of the 1st Air Command Squadron had contributed significantly to VNAF effectiveness by setting an example for the VNAF in the number of sorties flown, flying hours, and in the professionalism of the 1st ACS. <sup>30</sup>

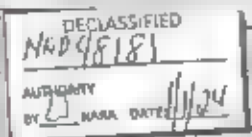
On 20 May 1964, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in a message to CINCPAC reaffirmed that the US policy in Vietnam was that the US military would not take part in combat. An exception was made in the case of Farngate aircraft, however, although these could be used only to fly bonafide operational training missions against hostile targets in order to prepare VNAF personnel to eventually take over from the USAF. <sup>31</sup>

The JCS also stated that helicopters in the theater were for use as transport only and their weapons were for the protection of vehicles or passengers. U.S. Army helicopters would not be used as a substitute for close support air strikes. US Military personnel assigned as advisers would be exposed to combat conditions only as required in the execution of their advisory duties. <sup>32</sup>

This statement of the JCS on the employment of Farngate aircraft and US Army helicopters was one of several actions in 1964 which helped resolve the question of a proper mix of US Army and USAF aircraft in the theater. In 1962 and 1963, the absence of clear cut directives in this area served as a limitation upon USAF activities in Vietnam. \*

\*Top Secret Project CHICO, Southeast Asia Report, Oct 61 - Dec 63, Vol IV.

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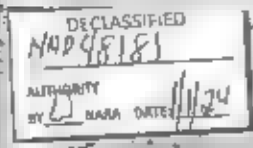
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The arrival of General Moore in January 1964, and the take-over of MACV by Lt. General William Westmoreland in June 1964, coincided with a new and genuine desire on the part of both the Army and Air Force to lay aside interservice difference and concentrate upon the important task of winning the war. There was still much to be done before the proper mix could be determined but the first major steps taken in this direction in 1964, promised well for the future.

Another serious limitation upon the effective use of air power in Vietnam was the increasing ability of the elusive and highly adaptable Viet Cong to use the Vietnam environment to his advantage. The Viet Cong was learning how to direct effective ground fire against low flying attacks and starting in mid-1963, there was a substantial increase in the number of US and VNAF planes lost due to hostile ground fire. The VC's infiltration among the peasants in country villages and rice paddies and his ability to take advantage of the thick jungle curtain reaching up to 250 feet made him a difficult target for even the most sophisticated weapons. He was learning to set up traps for US aircraft, particularly the use of ground stakes against helicopters, and he had even devised a crude but effective system of radar which required none of the electronic wizardry of modern Air Force systems. By tying his actions to periods when air support would be most limited, such as darkness and rainy periods, he was able to vitiate much of the effective strength of the VNAF and USAF in Vietnam.

Military action in combating the Communist guerrillas in Vietnam was only a part of a vast program directed by the US Embassy in Saigon to bring the insurgency under control. This program included political,

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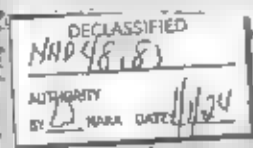


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economic, and psychological warfare aspects, all of which were linked in one way or another with military activities. That the need existed for these non-military approaches was apparent in the continuing strength of the Viet Cong. In January 1964, hard-core VC strength was estimated at 32,000. However, in 1963, 20,575 guerrillas were killed and 4,208 captured. In the previous year 20,919 were killed and 5,518 captured.<sup>33</sup> The number killed and captured each of the three years exceeded the estimated guerrilla strength in 1961 when the US entered the struggle. Also, the number killed in 1963 alone exceeded the total number of VC's estimated to have infiltrated into South Vietnam from the north in the years 1960, 1961, 1962 and 1963. In this four year period, 16,000 VC's had infiltrated from the north. It was obvious, therefore, that an independent military program for combating the insurgency in Vietnam was not enough. This military effort had to be carefully meshed with the non-military elements of the pacification effort, even though this called for certain restraints and a reduced flexibility.

One other fact needs to be mentioned to place the military role in Vietnam in its proper perspective. This was the neutralist sentiment which existed in the country after almost 20 years of fighting, a sentiment which was bound to have its influence upon the military role. It was this latent appeal of neutralism which in 1964 gave rise to increasing demands for an extension of the war to North Vietnam. This neutralist feeling was reflected in both the November 1963 and January 1964 coups. It was supported by both the Communist camp and by General de Gaulle of France. That it was a growing danger was stated in one of



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Saigon's two English-language newspapers, both of which had to clear their copy through the Government before publication. The Saigon Daily News, in an editorial on 29 July 1964, said that unless the war were carried to North Vietnam and the emphasis shifted from intensification in South Vietnam, there would be an intensification of neutralist sentiment. It added: 34.

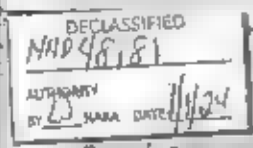
...If the Viet Cong pressure is allowed to continue unchecked...and if nothing is done intelligently and effectively - that is, without destroying more lives and properties here in the South - then our people are entitled to wish for peace at any price, because this would at least mean an end to senseless death and destruction, for every war is senseless if what is necessary to win is not done...

...Their capacity for dying and suffering has practically reached a limit beyond which de Gaulle's ideas become more and more tempting to them. In fact, mentally, our people is (sic) more and more drawn to the decision: either a second front or de Gaulle...

In August, discussing several statements by US officials that the war should be won or lost on the battlefields of South Vietnam, the Daily News cited this American viewpoint as "the fundamental difference underlying the Vietnamese and American views of the war, differences which will surely grow with time." The idea of a "small war" fought with South Vietnam as the principal battlefield, the newspaper said, would only mean "death and destruction for us." It continued: 35.

...We should therefore expect that in the coming years, if not months, the conviction will grow among our people, especially among those living in the countryside, the real scene of fighting, death, and suffering, that

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to continue the war under the present circumstances is sheer nonsense, even more, a national suicide, a kind of self-inflicted genocide, and that it would be better for them to seek an end to the war, by any means...

...No Vietnamese should accept without qualms of conscience the view that South Vietnam must remain indefinitely the principal battlefield of a war, any war, civil or international. He is entitled to demand a quick victory, or a peace settlement, or the shifting of the war elsewhere. The American Government, and our Government especially, should bear that in mind.

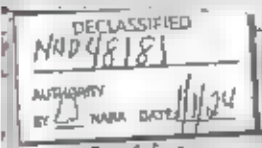
Whatever the motivation for these editorials, they did reflect to a considerable degree the rising sentiment in South Vietnam during 1964 for an extension of the war to the north, a sentiment which was also expressed in Government-backed public demonstrations for the "Bac Tien" policy. It was apparent that planners for the US military counter-insurgency role would have to take into account this nationalist feeling as well as its corollary in Vietnam, an extension of the war outside the borders of South Vietnam.

It was within this framework of limitations that the USAF had to carry out its air mission in Southeast Asia. This, plus the fact that the Air Force was still "writing the book" on a new type of warfare, called for an Air Force organization responsive to changing conditions and changing roles and missions.

On 30 June 1964, the T-28's and B-26's which had carried the brunt of the USAF strike commitment in 1962 and 1963 were out of the picture and the first of 50 authorized A-1E's arrived at Bien Hoa. The Air Operations Center, the heart of the air control network in Vietnam, was moving toward greater control over all air resources in Vietnam and improving its capacity for expanded operations. Administrative, living, and support

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facilities were being improved throughout the theater with consequent improvements in morale and work efficiency. Although attacks by the VC were increasing in frequency and intensity, he was becoming a more identifiable target for air strikes. Based on experience for the first half of the year, the number of VC killed by air strikes in 1964 would be much greater than the 7224 killed in 1963. Improved airfield facilities in the Mekong Delta area and in the northern mountain areas were increasing the flexibility of air power and preparing it for expanded operations including operations outside the borders of Vietnam.

As was always the case in the Vietnamese struggle, the air portion of the overall counterinsurgency effort was influenced by events outside the range of normal military activities. The January coup, for example, which placed General Nguyen Khanh in power, had its influence upon the Air Force role. So did the new National Campaign Plan started in March. A major reorganization of the MACV headquarters in May, particularly the elimination of the MAAG, presented an organizational problem for the AF.

This chapter will discuss some of the major influences which affected the 2d AD organization 1964 and the major organizational developments experienced by the command during the first half of 1964.

#### The 30 January Coup

Control of the Republic of Vietnam was taken over by Maj. Gen. Nguyen Khanh on 30 January 1964 in a bloodless coup which deposed the military junta which had been ruling Vietnam since the November coup. A new 20 member cabinet, headed by General Khanh was formed as the government on 8 February. This cabinet represented a balanced formation of political, religious and regional views and was felt by US observers to

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constitute a broader base than any other previous Vietnamese cabinet. 36.

On 31 January, the day following the coup, General Harkins called on General Khanh. General Khanh cited as the reason for the coup the administrative inefficiency of the displaced government and the pro-neutralist machinations of Generals Don, Kim and Huan, all of whom were arrested. General Khanh said he did not feel the military junta was getting on with the war, that they were not giving full support to the combat soldiers. Many of the members, he said, were ready to declare South Vietnam neutral. The reason he decided on 30 January as the date was that he had information he was to be arrested at the Corps Commanders Conference scheduled for that date. He also said he had word that General Minh was to be arrested and General Kim was going on the air to announce neutralism. He agreed to make every effort to carry out the new National Pacification Plan which was to go into effect the next day, although some changes would have to be made. General Khanh then said that he had contacted General Harkins on 28 January telling him what was in the wind so he would allay any opinion on the part of the press as to where the two generals stood with each other. 37.

General Harkins, in a message to CINCPAC, said he had known General Khanh intimately for two years and that in his opinion, the general was the strongest military character in the country. "If anyone can give strong direction to the effort here, I think Khanh can," said General Harkins. Khanh told him that he was determined not to allow French influence to come back into South Vietnam. He ended the interview by saying that he looked in the mirror every day and said to himself:



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"What have you done for your country today. If I cannot answer that I have done one or two things", he added, "I feel I have lost a day". 38.

Although this second coup gave a temporary advantage to the Viet Cong who sought to profit from the resultant confusion, it was felt by the US that the new government would be more efficient than the previous one and that counterinsurgency operations would have a better chance of success. The counterinsurgency program, it was felt, never had a fair trial under the Diem Government since clear and bold and strategic hamlet operations were not mounted on any planned systematic basis, particularly in the Mekong Delta and since much of the Vietnamese population had been alienated from the Diem Government. Under the new regime, the State Department believed that the prospects of winning the war were good. By winning, it meant the establishment of government authority throughout South Vietnam. General Khanh rejected the neutralist approach to a settlement and he understood the importance of winning the support of people in the rural areas. The State Department planned to give General Khanh its full support and backing. 39.

Another impact of the January coup on the Air Force operation in Vietnam lay in the continued loyalty of VNAF commander, Colonel Nguyen Cao Ky. Colonel Ky was appointed VNAF Commander on 16 Dec. 1963 following the November coup. He replaced Col Mai who was ordered to Bonn as Military Attache. In the period immediately following the coup, when Saigon was filled with rumors of another attempt, Colonel Ky, in an interview with the US Air Attache in Saigon, said that he would not support another coup and that his only objective was to hold the VNAF together as a solid fighting unit. His only interest, he said, was in

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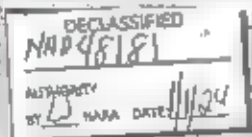
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directing the VNAF in the interests of Vietnam and to instill a nationalistic feeling in all the VNAF. Backing up this belief with action, he installed six recoilless rifles at Tan Son Nhut to keep tanks from occupying his headquarters and took other action to defend his bases against being forced into support for any splinter group. He said that if someone would approach him and talk, he would talk, but not under the barrels of tank guns. To further strengthen his position of supporting the integrity of the VNAF, he equipped the 517th Squadron's T-28's at Tan Son Nhut with rocket rails planning to carry four pods on each aircraft. This was in order to have some strike capability at Tan Son Nhut and to be ready for anything. <sup>40.</sup>

This stand by Colonel Ky proved helpful to the Khanh government and to Colonel Ky personally. Ky, who had received a small French sedan from General Minh after the November coup, received from Khanh a new French Beaulieu sedan following the January coup. In the two coups, he was promoted from a Lieutenant Colonel commanding a group to a full Colonel commanding the VNAF. This was considered customary in Southeast Asia to insure the support and allegiance of selected officers and officials. <sup>41.</sup>

Colonel Ky believed in pressing ahead on the air war and even wanted to supply his forces with jets. He felt that the VNAF needed an additional squadron of AD-6's right away and that within a year, his pilots should begin working with jets. His plan was to request a small unit of six T-38's equipped for reconnaissance, allowing the VNAF to up-grade jet pilots and crews, respecting the Geneva accords and releasing or augmenting the USAF RF-101's in Vietnam. In general

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it was felt that the appointment of Col. Ky, promoted to Air Commodore on 5 March 1964, as VNAF commander, would improve the aggressiveness of the VNAF in fighting the air war in Vietnam.<sup>\*42.</sup>

General Ky, after the first coup, had worked out the new organization plan which would give the VNAF four composite wings. In a talk with General Ky shortly after the event, a US source reported that wing commanders would work closely with the corps commander, but they would remain under the sole control of the VNAF commander. The source further stated that the primary role of VNAF was to support the Army and that the new organization was better suited to this task. The source envisioned closer relations with USAF advisers in the future and hoped that informal weekly meetings between the VNAF staff and USAF counterparts could be established to resolve any current problems on a current basis.<sup>43.</sup>

Perhaps the most significant outcome of this event was General Ky's reiteration that as VNAF commander, he would not lose control of VNAF units to the corps commander in spite of a recent announcement by the ruling junta that the corps commander would control all forces in their respective areas.<sup>44.</sup>

#### The Air Role under the ~~1964~~ Thang Pacification Plan

One of the most significant effects of the 30 January coup was the decision by newly installed Premier Nguyen Khanh to "go after" the VC

\* One example of the relationship between Gen Ky and the USAF was his request to Gen. Moore in April 1964 to obtain Major Raymond E. Nicholson as his adviser for the VNAF C-123 program. Gen. Ky felt strongly about getting Nicholson and action was taken to bring Nicholson back from the US for a second tour in Vietnam.

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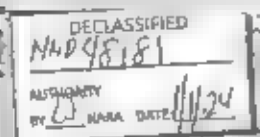
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in a more aggressive manner than ever. The coup took place three days before the "Dien Hong" Pacification Plan was scheduled to start. Commanders in corps areas, the day after the coup, were still planning to go ahead with initial operations. Premier Khanh revalidated the plan with some modifications on 17 February. On 18 February, it was endorsed by his ministers and its name changed to the Chien Thang National Pacification Plan.<sup>45</sup> This plan was based on the Malaya-tested "spreading oil stain" concept in which government forces would move into critical areas, establish security and then spread out to other areas where the same process was taking place. Pacification was looked upon as a gradual and continuing process, proceeding from safe areas to unsafe areas, from populous areas to thinly populated, poor areas. Security would be completely restored in one area before moving on to the next. The plan was in two phases; first, clearing operations to annihilate the VC or expel him from an area, and second, destruction of the underground infrastructure (VC cells) establishment of friendly infrastructures and building of a "new life" program. The program would have political aspects, strict law enforcement, for example, economic programs such as building of roads, hospitals and schools, and psychological war phases such as the "open arms" program to bring former VC people back into the Government side.<sup>46</sup>

Under the first pacification plan, which was written in the late fall of 1962, the whole idea was to saturate the countryside with RVNAF actions, small and large; to seek and destroy and fragment the VC effort. This plan, approved by the Diem Government in February 1963 and kicked off on 1 July 1963, built up to about 15,000 actions a month in August.

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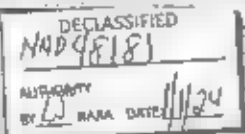
However, the RVN political situation was beginning to deteriorate at that time and the Diem Government's emphasis was turned aside from offensive military action against the VC to maintaining its own existence. The take-over of the government by the MRC on 1 November wrote finish to this plan. <sup>47</sup>.

The Military Revolutionary Council, with US help, wrote up its second plan, the Dien Hong Pacification Plan. Based on the "spreading oil stain" concept and placing greater emphasis upon other government civil actions, this was scheduled to go into action on 3 February, three days after the second coup. This plan, with some modifications, was essentially the one adopted by the Khanh government and re-named the Chien Thang Pacification Plan. <sup>48</sup>.

In commenting upon the latest pacification plan in June 1964, General Paul D. Harkins said it offered a "chance of getting the counterinsurgency effort under control," a task which he felt was the main mission of the US military effort in RVN. "We have a stronger military base than we had a year ago" and we are ready to go again", he added, "If we can fill the military units to their required strengths in the next four months, by late fall we should be able to put even more pressure on the VC than we are today."\* General Harkins said he did not see that the VC, in mid-1964, had the capability of seizing and holding any district or province capital. <sup>49</sup>.

\* In the cited message, General Harkins noted that in 1961, he could see the culmination of the American effort as coming about in the Spring of 1963 and that from then on, "we should be able to pick the fruits of our work."

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Guiding the pacification program was the National Pacification Committee chaired by the Prime Minister with Vice Premier Hoan as deputy. The executive agent for pacification was the RVNAF High Command. The commissariat for the "new life" hamlets was transferred to the High Command and added to the staff of "J" level with Colonel Loc as the new head. Col. Loc ran the strategic hamlet program under deposed Premier Diem. Corps commanders were charged with all aspects of pacification within their areas and specifically responsible for review, coordination, and approval of provincial pacification plans. The division commander was not in the planning channel but he was in execution channels. 50.

Under this latest pacification plan, province chiefs were made fully responsible for pacification operations in populated areas and given commensurate authority. This meant they could command forces allocated to pacification operations in their provinces. Operations against major VC bases within the province would be conducted by the division or corps depending on the level of operation.

At the 18 February ministerial meeting, Premier Khanh acknowledged that the plan would prove defective in certain aspects but he added that it was infinitely better to get on with the job, find out the problems, and make necessary adjustments. 51.

At the first meeting of the Pacification Council held on 21 February, General Khanh directed that several ministries augment III Corps and provinces under corps jurisdiction by a total of 595 civil servants. These would report to III Corps ready for assignment by 25 February. They would include personnel assigned to national police, information,

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health, rural affairs, agriculture, interior, youth sports, and civic action. At the same meeting, a concept for revitalization of the hamlet program was presented and approved as an annex to the pacification plan. 52.

The enormity of the pacification task was recognized in the basic plan. The VC was determined to create among the people a feeling that the continuation of the war was useless by a campaign of terror and ruthless guerrilla tactics. To do this, he got training and support from North Vietnam. At the time, VC strength was given as 32,000 regulars, 8,000 administrative and command people, and 50 to 60 thousand militia, guerrilla, and self defense people. He was armed with BAR's, .30 and .50 caliber machine guns, 60mm and 81mm mortars, 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles and an assortment of mines and traps. Reinforcements for the VC were provided from four training sites in North Vietnam where training of a few days to 10 months was given. From there, trainees were taken by railroad to border points and moved by four roads merging to two through Laos into South Vietnam. Since 1960, it was estimated that 16,000 VC cadres had infiltrated into South Vietnam, 2243 in 1960, 6665 in 1961, 5048 in 1962, and 1928 in 1963. The men came in 32 groups of about 500-700 men to a group. It was obvious that the pacification plan would have to include provisions for cutting off this reinforcement route and that air power would have a role to play here as in other aspects of the overall effort. 53.

This concept was felt by PACAF to be made to order for a sustained offensive campaign by employment of air resources. As the oil stain spread, the insurgents would be forced into pockets that would be well

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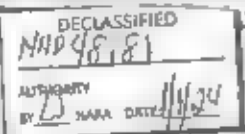
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fertilized and protected. To root out the VC from these pockets with ground forces would cost many lives. PACAF believed that a concerted RVNAF air and ground interdiction program, could cause more VC casualties, adversely affect insurgent morale, increase the defection rate and clearly illustrate the intent and power of the GVN to annihilate the VC. An accelerated interdiction program against already established VC bases with the resultant casualties, supply destruction, hindrance of movement, and aerial surveillance would greatly assist the ground forces in their part of the pacification plan. An immediate effect, it was felt, would be that many fence-sitting Vietnamese would be convinced that the GVN was mounting a successful campaign against the insurgents and pledge their support to the government. <sup>54.</sup>

This new approach to the war, it was held, would require the institution of new thinking, reorientation of tactics and techniques and the provision of additional resources to insure effective air support. Tactical air resources would have to be made available at the time and place required. This was predicated on the location of bases, alert condition, aircraft speed, and range. It could mean an increase in the deployment of aircraft to remote air fields for temporary periods. The mobility and habitat of the VC precluded the use of preplanned targeting to any great degree. The most effective (and most expensive) way of assuring timely reaction to air requests would be a continuous air alert at key points in Vietnam. The second best way would be to have sufficient aircraft on a 24 hour ground alert throughout RVN. Air resources in April precluded this latter choice. However, to provide support for the "Chien Thang" operations

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plan, there would have to be a sufficient percentage of tactical air resources on ground or air alert to satisfy requests of an immediate nature. 55.

The ideal arrangement, according to PACAF, would be to have a small number of jet aircraft carrying out the alert role in RVN but this was not possible because of the 1954 Geneva agreement and international politics. The next best thing would be propeller-driven or jet prop type aircraft in sufficient numbers to assure the establishment of the proper alert status at hard airfields and deployment airstrips. Due to limitation in VNAF existing and programmed aircraft and crews, the USAP would have to provide the additional support necessary to provide the timely, responsive reaction to all valid requests for air support. 56.

The USAP would also have to help in control of the border through increased air reconnaissance in conjunction with air strikes. Since the VC were able to effectively counter the USAP/VNAF kill rate by infiltrating thousands of hard-core communists from across the border, air power was necessary for this task. There were not, however, enough strike aircraft in Vietnam to do both jobs. Surveillance of the RVN, Cambodia, Laos borders would require one sortie every 30 minutes during daylight and one sortie every two hours at night. Any immobilization of the insurgents by interdiction strikes and armed reconnaissance would help the ground forces in their job of dealing with the enemy under the pacification plan. 57.

The pacification plan would require a much greater night air effort. The VC would expend any effort to negate the "oil stain" concept and one real opportunity open to them would be to attack and destroy the safe

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areas under cover of darkness, thus proving the government's inability to protect them. A much larger night defensive capability, particularly the use of air alerted flare ships and strike fighters, would deny the VC this propaganda advantage. <sup>58.</sup>

To give the US Army and RVNAF personnel better indoctrination on the air capabilities in RVN, PACAF initiated a program predicated on an increase of 26 ALO's and FAC's into the Tactical Air Control System. This would place a total of 75 ALO's and FAC's at ground force echelons. By better indoctrination on the use of air power and by better communications, there would invariably be an increase in valid requirements for air support and a commensurate need for an increase in air resources. <sup>59.</sup>

That the ARVN did not appreciate the value of fixed wing air support was evident on two occasions in January 1964. During Operation Da Phong 35, A-1H aircraft were orbiting the combat position and additional aircraft were available on alert only a few miles away, but this strike power was not used. Instead the contact with the VC degenerated into an unfavorable melee on the ground. On 16 January, during the ambush of an ARVN company participating in Operation Dan Tam 1, a request for heliborne reinforcements was made but the regiment commander did not think of the A-1H support readily available to him. These were but two instances which pointed up the need for increased education in air power to ARVN forces. <sup>60.</sup>

The objective of placing more air power in the Vietnam struggle to meet the requirements of the new pacification program pointed out the problem of limited theater air resources. At the time April 1964, the

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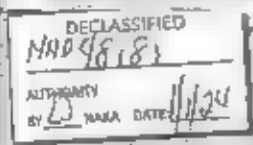
USAF was down to 10 T-28's. The VNAF had 30 T-28's and 76 A-1H's. In the first three months of 1964, an average of 50 air requests a month were not satisfied because of lack of sufficient strike aircraft. This was up from the average of 43 during the last six months of 1963. The number of sorties lost was much greater since two or more aircraft sorties were required to satisfy each request. Since RVN experience was that one VC casualty could be expected from each strike sortie flown, the VC were benefiting from this air deficiency in freedom of movement. 61.

That the increase in air strength would have to go to the USAF as well as the VNAF was apparent in statistics which showed that although the VNAF was programmed at 80% of the US flying hour rate, in fact, it only averaged about 50%. Additionally, 90% of the USAF flying time was devoted to combat flying versus 70% for the VNAF. 62.

One other argument for increased USAF/VNAF air strength was the increasing ground fire being received from the VC.

The VC was using massed anti-aircraft automatic weapons which were well dug in and providing shelters for the crews. Attacking aircraft were taken under fire until the ordnance was released, then the gun crews would jump into prepared shelters. When the attacking aircraft had completed its pass, the gun crews would emerge and prepare for the next pass. During a 1964 encounter with this type defense, one aircraft was shot down and 18 others hit. In the period between 1 February and 18 April 1964, when strike sorties were at a reduced level due to the grounding of the B-26's, the USAF and VNAF lost three A-1H's and five T-28's. More aircraft on these strikes would permit strikes against the VC defenses

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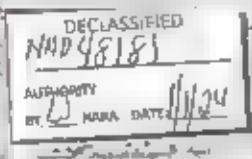
after the first plane made its target run. <sup>63</sup>

This new emphasis by the Khanh government on stepping up the war coincided with a critical problem of USAF air resources in Vietnam in the first half of 1964. The critical situation regarding USAF aircraft in Vietnam in the period immediately following publication of the Chien Thang Pacification Plan is discussed later in this history.

The complexity of the task of relating US military objectives to the overall pacification program was revealed in an exchange of messages between Washington, Saigon, and Hanoi at about the same time as the new pacification plan was released. On 15 February, JCS wired CINCPAC that it had concluded that an "immediate counterinsurgency offensive" in Long An Province should be undertaken to restore effective GVN control and make that province a model for similar action in other critical provinces and a symbol of a revitalized overall war effort. It asked that a comprehensive plan be developed with the country team for "earliest accomplishment." <sup>64</sup>

Upon seeing the JCS instructions, the US Minister Counselor in Saigon, David G. Nease, who was acting as head of the Embassy in Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge's absence, noted that it was the "most discouraging" instruction he had seen since joining the Vietnamese effort two months previous. He said it revealed "an almost total lack of comprehension" of the character of the Vietnam problem and of the current situation. It was based on three assumptions, he said, none of which were true in February 1964. These were (1) an indigenous communist insurgency enjoying full external communist support could be defeated by such an "offensive" in a measurable period of time; (2) The GVN had adequate political cohesion

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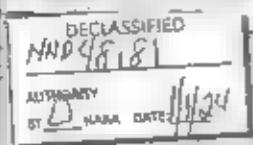
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and leadership, centralized control and local administrative talent to launch a concentrated counterinsurgency offensive in Long An or anywhere else; and (3) The US mission in Vietnam had sufficient influence and control over South Vietnam to persuade it to do so. <sup>65</sup>

The State Department suggested to MACV that its reply, made in coordination with the Country Team, include the "utter impossibility" of launching an immediate concentrated counterinsurgency offensive or of achieving quick success if such action were possible. "In my opinion," Mr. Ness said, "we face a long hard pull with final success probably dependent more upon developments external to Vietnam than in our counterinsurgency efforts here." <sup>66</sup>

In replying to CINCPAC on the JCS message, COMUSMACV said that in his view, "an immediate concentrated counterinsurgency offensive in Long An province is not fully attainable." He listed several reasons for this. First, the GVN did not accord Long An the unique priority which was the pre-condition for massing overwhelming resources in that province. In the Chien Thang Plan, Long An was only one of nine provinces in National Priority One. Within this group of nine, the GVN ranked at least two other provinces more critical than Long An. Secondly, the "spreading all concept" of working from secure areas outward required that pacification operations proceed concurrently in all provinces. By agreement with the US Secretary of Defense, the ARVN buildup in contiguous provinces was equal to that in Long An. Thirdly, a bizarre command structure at province and from province upward, had throttled real progress and troops assigned to pacification had been frequently replaced or called to operations outside the province. Long An had relatively the

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lowest troop density of the critical delta provinces. Long An, however, needed to be pacified and an integrated civilian military plan was essential to guide pacification operations.<sup>67</sup>

COMUSMACV added that the Vietnam provincial plan for Long An was out of balance in that it was without sufficient specificity on hamlet repair and construction, recruitment, training and employment of administrative, civic action and political action cadres, employment of public works resources, population and resources control measures, psychological and informational programs, training of hamlet militia leaders and militiamen, and numerous other areas. These significant gaps were unavoidable by reason of lack of national policy guidance and the failure to allocate resources.<sup>68</sup>

COMUSMACV concluded that detailed plans could only be produced at the field level by personnel intimately familiar with the environment in which pacification operations would take place and that the role of US advisory and support personnel was to guide and assist their counterparts to develop sound plans. The maximum effectiveness stemmed from joint rather than separate efforts and a completely US-prepared plan would not meet the Vietnam feasibility test nor be salable. However, on the assumption that a US mission plan for Long An still was wanted, COMUSMACV proposed to provide a basic pacification plan (military for Long An).<sup>69</sup>

The 2d Air Division took on the task of helping in development of a VNAF air operations plan to support the Chien Thang National Pacification Plan.

The plan gave VNAF a major role to play in the destruction and

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suppression of VC influence and organization within the pacification areas and in the plan's denial operations to prevent the return of VC forces to secured areas. Round the clock operations were necessary for this task. It embraced the whole of the VNAF's resources; close air support, interdiction, escort, border defense, air defense, recon, and airlift. The VNAF was limited by the number of fighters it possessed and by the non-readiness until October of the important delta base of Can Tho, where the 74th Tactical Wing was to be stationed. However, the USAF was responsible for meeting all the needs for air support above the capabilities of the VNAF. Operations would be directed through the Tactical Air Control System with the AOC as the central controlling agency. 70.

In support of the plan, the VNAF established four tactical wings equipped with all types of aircraft, (fighters, observation planes, helicopters, and transports) one wing being assigned to each corps area. The 41st Tactical Wing was located at Da Nang to support I Corps, the 62d at Pleiku to support II Corps, the 23rd at Bien Hoa for III Corps support and the 74th (scheduled for activation in October 1964 when Can Tho was completed) to support IV Corps. Interim support for IV Corps until the activation of the 74th at Can Tho was provided from Bien Hoa by the 23rd. A recon and transport wing was located at Tan Son Nhut as a common air support facility. 71.

With the activation of the 74th, the VNAF would have four fighter squadrons of 100 A-1H's. By October, it was scheduled to have a total of 277 aircraft compared to 201 on hand in June 1964. The June strength

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and proposed October strength are as follows: <sup>72.</sup>

	<u>1 June 1964</u>	<u>1 October 1964</u>
A-1H	67	100
H-34	28	60
O-1A	43	51
U-6A	9	9
C-47	33	36
RT-28	18	18
HC-47	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
TOTAL:	201	277

In the plan, the VNAF instructed that commanders pay attention to the use of fighters as escorts for helicopter operations. They were also told to watch for close coordination between air support firepower and naval and artillery fire. On top of close support missions, the VNAF was to use all the firepower available to it by day and night strikes to harass enemy combat zones, secret zones, routes of communication and avenues of approach. Responsibility for the control of these operations lay with the AOC at Tan Son Nhut. The AOC was also responsible for coordinating the use of the USAP in Vietnam to meet all the needs for air support above the capabilities of the VNAF. <sup>73.</sup>

In June 1964, it was too early to judge the effectiveness of the Chien Thang Plan. There was, however, a noticeable improvement in the tactics employed by the RVN forces. Approximately 74% of the small unit operations conducted during May occurred at night. The low percentage of small unit operations with contact was felt by General Harkins to be an indication that the increased tempo and scope of GVN small unit operations was paying off by keeping the VC off balance. He noted that the VC mounted attacks only after careful planning and only where the odds were decisively in their favor. The constant flux of small

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unit activities made these set-piece type operations extremely difficult for the VC to organize and execute. 74.

General Harkins pointed out, however, that while failure to make contact was not necessarily a sign of ineffectiveness of the ARVN, the destruction of VC forces and bases could come only as a result of contact and it was in this area that improvement was required. 75.

Lt. Gen. William C. Westmoreland, deputy commander, USMACV felt that the Chien Thang Plan was no more than a sound concept, but that it was less than national in scope. Hurriedly prepared province plans varied widely in scope, format and quality. They were deficient in that they did not develop the necessary force and resource requirements to back up the schedule of pacification operations on a district by district, village by village, basis. The plan concentrated on critical provinces where one could start from the beginning but there was less guidance for those provinces largely pacified or partially pacified where a different approach or emphasis was needed. Priority on all resources went to the critical areas, when in fact, the non-critical provinces should have had priority on such resources as police or capital investments. "This command is determined to make the Chien Thang Plan work," said General Westmoreland.

General Westmoreland met with Premier Khanh on 25 June for a discussion of the pacification program. General Westmoreland told the Prime Minister that the pacification plans of the provinces around Saigon were not coordinated and were incompatible with a sound pacification strategy. He suggested, and General Khanh agreed, that positive steps should be taken to ensure coordination at field level and

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that coordinating responsibility should be given to the Commanding General, III Corps/7th Division. 77.

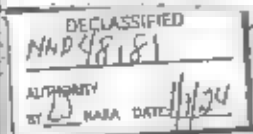
In their talks, General Westmoreland offered a three point strategy to General Khanh. First, the pacification effort should be methodically moved outward from Saigon generally along concentric circles with a single field headquarters coordinating the effort at field level and the JCS providing resources and reviewing progress. Secondly, at secure bases forward of the area under methodical pacification, aggressive troops such as rangers should be stationed to seize the initiative from the VC and relieve pressure on the area under pacification. Third, joint operations should be launched to destroy the VC main force units and bases when intelligence justified such action, using troops of the general reserve. The airborne brigade would be used inland and the Marine brigade along the coast and river estuaries. 78

General Khanh agreed to a suggestion that an entire regiment should be moved by a massive airlift to the critical Long An Province. General Westmoreland wanted to call upon heavier aircraft of the 315th Air Division to augment the C-123's for this move. General Khanh agreed that such a move would have a good effect upon the Vietnamese in showing the power and equipment that the US had made available to support them. Plans for this air movement were being developed at the end of June 1964. 79.

Increasing USAF and VNAF Strength in Vietnam

In mid-1964, the 31 T-28's and B-26's of the 1st Air Command Squadron were being phased out and replaced by 50 of the much more effective A-1H's. At the same time, the VNAF was receiving A-1H's

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for its third squadron. Action was under way at the time to get an additional squadron of A-1H's for the VNAF and a third A-1E squadron for the USAF.

The increases would more than double the fixed wing striking power in Vietnam in 1964, but even more important, they placed in the theater an aircraft which had proved highly adaptable to the COIN environment.

The need for this increased strength lay partly in B-26 wing structural deficiencies which were revealed in early 1964 and signs of wear and tear on the T-28. More important, as the tempo of the Vietnam struggle sharply rose in 1964, there was developing a greater appreciation of the role of air in counterinsurgency operations. In fact the originally programmed force, of 50 A-1E's and 75 A-1H aircraft for August 1964 was believed to be inadequate to the air mission and the additional squadrons were requested.

An important argument for additional air was the increasing demand by ground units for air support of which only 50% or less could be met. Partly because of a 2d AD program for indoctrinating ARVN personnel on air capabilities, and an overall improvement in the TACS, the number of air requests, particularly from III and IV Corps areas, was on the increase. In III Corps, an average of about 45% to 50% of requests were being met in June 1964. In IV Corps, the southern delta area, where heavy fighting took place in mid-1964, only 39% of requests for air were satisfied. The reason requests could not be filled was primarily the lack of aircraft, both observation planes and fighter planes. Where aircraft were available, the inability of the VNAF to respond either because of lack of training or lack of motivation, con-

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tributed to the problem. The way to get the percentage of responses to requests up was to have more aircraft and better trained and motivated VMF pilots to fly them. In the case of III Corps, the lack of an adequate airfield in the delta area was a factor in the low percentage although a new airfield at Can Tho was being constructed. <sup>80</sup>

In a study prepared in May 1964, the 2d AD pointed out that air requests for the previous six months displayed a definite upward trend which pointed toward a predicted 746 air requests in the month of August, when the 125 planes were expected to be in place. This was a conservative estimate based on the pre-April 1964 situation, but several new factors would raise this number. The 30% increase in the ALO/FAC program which would be completed by August would give the ARVN more guidance on the use of air. Under the Chien Thang Pacification Plan, there was an increase in ARVN aggressiveness and rate of contact and at the same time, the Viet Cong were not only more aggressive but were employing larger forces with more ambitious objectives than ever before. The increase in the size of attacks would make the need for air support greater. Newly created tactical zones in areas where the VC were exceptionally strong also pointed to increased air support for these areas. Finally, defoliation missions and psych war missions were on the increase and with the improved AA tactics and weapons being used by the VC, air escort for these missions would be increased. <sup>81</sup>

Based on an average of 30 sorties per month for the A-1E's and 25 for the VMF A-1H's and assuming that 90% of the sorties for both aircraft would be combat support, a total combat sortie potential of 3038 could be expected in August. Using the conservative estimate of 746 re-



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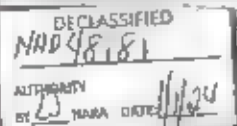
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quests, this sortie potential would provide 4.1 sorties per expected combat request. This would be no different than what was experienced in early 1964. In the first three months of 1964, the average flight six per request was 1.93 aircraft, meaning that about two average flights per air request were honored. For increased effectiveness on the ground and to provide mutual protection against enemy ground fire, the 2d AD wanted to fly flights of four aircraft. Two aircraft could strike the target with two more providing flak suppression. With the limited number of aircraft programmed, it was almost certain that the ratio of two flights or eight aircraft per combat request could not be maintained. 82.

At the ratio on only six aircraft per request, the 746 requests expected in August would generate a monthly requirement of 4476 sorties. The 125 plane force could provide only 3038 estimated sorties, far less than needed. It would take a bedded-down force of 103 A-1E's and 75 A-1H's to do this job and even this would not provide the flexibility over and above answering requests that was necessary for optimum use of air power. An effective air alert program was necessary to reduce reaction time and though it would mean more aircraft, it would pay off in increased effectiveness. 83.

The study noted that in the first four months of 1964, an average of 4.8 aircraft were used for each pre-strike landing zone operation. On over 42% of these, the T-28 with its limited ordnance was the only strike aircraft involved. Pre-striking the landing zones was an important operation and an average of 4.8 strike aircraft was clearly far short of the operational requirement for A-1E aircraft, let alone T-28's. Pre-strikes in the heavily forested areas of I, II and III Corps zones were

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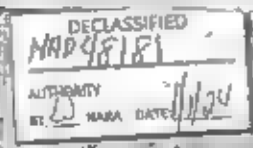
made against the entire perimeter of a landing zone completely surrounded by natural cover. The size of a landing zone varied. To operate 12 CH-21's or 15 UH-1's, a zone about 450' by 900' was desirable. However, this was seldom possible and the ordinary landing zone averaged about 300' by 300'. To account for the undulating tree line and expected defense in depth, aircraft had to deliver ordnance at least 300' in from the idealized rectangular perimeter. This would make four equal side rectangles surrounding the landing zone, each measuring 600' by 300' and each being considered as a separate target. Napalm was the best available weapon for this task, but the dense forest growth reduced its effectiveness by up to 50%.

To get a 50% casualty level in these rectangles, it was estimated that 110 bombs would be required and since each A-1E carried only ten bombs, eleven aircraft per rectangle or a total of 44 aircraft would be necessary. To get 80% casualties, 56 aircraft would be required. This case of pre-strike of landing zones was given as one example to indicate that 50 A-1E and 75 A-1H aircraft would not provide the tactical flexibility necessary.<sup>84.</sup>

There was a possibility, with the tempo of the war increasing as it was, that three pre-strike operations might be required in the same day. These could well involve 150 aircraft, or 200 bedded-down aircraft with an operationally ready rate of 75%.<sup>85.</sup>

The unique situation in Vietnam was cited as a reason for more use of air. Unlike Korea, where units under pressure could usually be assured of ground support, in Vietnam, the probability that a unit under attack

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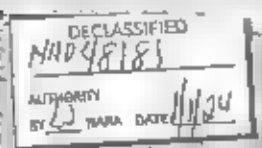
could get timely help from another ground unit was remote. There were no laterally emplaced units or significant amount of zeroed-in artillery to call upon. Air support was not only the most important means of support but in the majority of cases, the only means.

In conclusion, the report noted that in Korea, close support could be provided over a 130 mile line encompassing a total area of less than 1000 square miles; and an average of 2572 sorties per month were provided. In Vietnam, where virtually the entire country of some 60,000 square miles could be considered for close support operations, an average of 220 per month were available plus additional support from highly vulnerable and relatively ineffective Army aircraft. This immense area in Vietnam encompassing nine friendly field divisions, special forces at large, and a determined, aggressive, well-armed and well-supported enemy force with increasing war making potential made the need for close air support in Vietnam at least as great as it was in Korea. That the appreciation for the increased need for air was making itself felt on all levels was apparent in 1964 when plans were under way to provide Vietnam with a total of 175 strike planes, more than double the strength at the beginning of the year. With the war tempo increasing and the B-26's and T-28's restricted due to structural failures, the new aircraft could arrive none too soon.

#### Phase-Out of B-26's and T-28's

The T-28 and B-26 had performed magnificently in support of the USAF strike role in Vietnam since 1962 but their eclipse became apparent in April 1963 when the first problem of B-26 structural integrity arose. From April till the end of 1963, the 1st Air Commande Squadron, the only

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unit in the Air Force flying combat strike missions, was under strength. This situation was to further deteriorate in the first half of 1964 when the entire force was down to a handful of planes as a result of further problems with the wing structure.

The role of the T-28 and B-26 in the Vietnam war was partially responsible for the difficulties which arose. The crews flying these planes in 1963 were carrying out a rough schedule and statistically faced a 100% chance of battle damage in their one year tours. Chances of being shot down were 23.1% for the T-28 and 16.87% for the B-26. The nature of targets, (small groups of personnel, thatch type structures, and small water conveyances), the difficult terrain, and the increasing ability of the VC to direct ground fire against attacking planes, placed the aircraft under a terrific strain. In the second half of 1963, five strike planes of the 1st ACS were shot down. In that period, 11,915 sorties logging 22,114 flying hours were carried out. <sup>87.</sup>

Another possible cause of the aircraft structural problem which arose was given by Colonel Benjamin S. Preston, Jr., commander of the 34th Tactical Group at Bien Hoa since February 1964. In his "End of Tour" report, Colonel Preston wrote: <sup>88.</sup>

...I could hardly believe my eyes when I arrived here and saw the way these planes were being flown, and observed the tactics which were being used. The B-26 was being used as a straight fighter/bomber aircraft, with 40 degree dive angles, hard pullouts, and rolling pullouts. It was being thrown around with full aileron deflection at high speeds in clover-leaf gunnery patterns that went from the deck up to wingover around 2000 feet. The B-26 and T-28 both were being used to make rocket and machine gun attacks flat out on the deck, kicking up and flying through the clouds of mud and debris. The leading edges of the T-28

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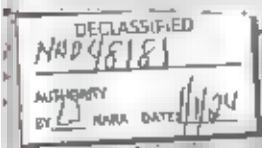
wings in particular looked as though they had been hammered in with sledge hammers. This type of flying did not evolve overnight, nor was it the idea or responsibility of any one individual. From the best I can determine, standard tactics were taught at Harbut, but the individuals who flew the aircraft here in Vietnam simply became more and more extreme and aggressive in their handling of the planes and in their application of tactics. Their spirit was wonderful, but judgment in handling war weary aircraft and their grasp of tactics left a lot to be desired...

When he took over the 34th Tactical Group on 1 February, Colonel Preston changed back to proven tactics to get more effective delivery of firepower and cut down the damage rate. He insisted on observation of acceleration limits and put a 1000 foot minimum altitude restriction on attack runs. It was too late, however. Every B-26 was showing signs of strain by cracked stress plates and loose and working rivets were located throughout the wing structure. 89.

A B-26 crash in Vietnam in January and a crash at Eglin AFB in February 1964 was followed by the grounding of the B-26. On 14 January, after completing its first napalm drop against hostile ground fire, a B-26 crashed and burned about 17 miles northeast of Bien Hoa in a VC stronghold. On 11 February, a B-26B flying at Eglin AFB crashed, with wing failure being suspected as the cause.

When it received the report on the B-26 crash at Eglin, on 16 February, PACAF cancelled all B-26 flying until further notice. 90. The aircraft at Bien Hoa were effectively grounded and General Moore planned to use them only in the event of an urgent operational requirement. He planned to assist the VNAF as much as possible to use the A-1H and T-28's to the maximum to make up the loss. 91.

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On 20 February, the restriction was lifted slightly. PACAF directed that as a result on the findings of the Eglin accident board which revealed metal fatigue of the lower wing spars, B-26 aircraft would be flown within certain limitations. Gross weight would not exceed 30,000 pounds. Aircraft would not be flown with external stores and all pylons removed until further notice. Aircraft would not be flown with external fuel tanks and tank pylons would be removed until further notice. Manoeuvring load factors would not exceed 2.5G and indicated airspeed would not exceed 270 m.p.h. For all practical purposes, these restrictions kept the plane from effective operations in the RVN. 92.

The aircraft accident investigation board studying the Eglin crash concluded in its final report that the primary cause of the accident was failure of the lower left spar cap through the outboard hold where the lower nacelle to the attachment fitting was installed. The spar failed under a load considerably below the design limit strength. Other systems were operating normally prior to the failure. The board recommended that all USAF B-26 aircraft be restricted from flight until such time as the structural integrity of the wing could be assured by use of a positive fix. 93.

Because of the need for using the A-1H's and T-28's remaining in RVN on important combat operational missions, 13th AF in a message to PACAF on 29 February noted that B-26's could be operated with 2.5G and 270 mph restriction using guns as a deterrent to attacking forces against trains. The strafing dive angle and firing speeds could be adjusted to accommodate air speed and G force restriction. It believed that the B-26's should be used for train escort missions instead of the A-1H's or T-28's. 94.



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However, on 19 March, 13th recommended that the 12 B-26 aircraft in RVN be cleared for a one time flight to NAS, Cubi Point, Philippines and asked for early removal in order to smooth the transition to the A-1E. 95.

PACAF considered the possibility of continuing the use of the recon versions of the B-26, particularly the RB-26L aircraft which was processed through AFIC before going to Vietnam. Since the RB-26's had not been subjected to the stresses and strains of the regular B-26 aircraft, it questioned whether it could not be used for further combat recon operations. 96. It requested detailed information on the condition of the RB-26C's and RB-26L's.

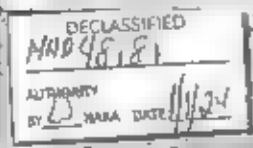
The commander of 2d AD, General Moore, in response to this message, re-stated that he considered B-26 and RB-26 aircraft unsafe for further combat operations. This position was supported<sup>ed</sup> by Headquarters 13th AF. It was recommended that all B-26's be removed from RVN as soon as possible to clear the way for the A-1E's. 97.

On 1 April, the B-26's and RB-26's were cleared for a one time flight to Clark AB. General Moore went to Bien Hoa to see these veterans off. He found among the crews at Bien Hoa a strong sentiment for this aircraft. In a message to 13th AF requesting that the B-26 be placed in the Air Force Museum, he quoted the words of the 34th Tac Group's commander, Colonel Preston: 98.

...In the press of events, we tend to overlook things important to future generations of Air Force pilots who will follow in our footsteps. We are making history here in Vietnam. What we do here will add some small part to the traditions of the Air Force and contribute to the heritage our successors. In order to leave some tangible record of our battles, it has occurred to me that we should earmark one of our B-26 aircraft for the Air Force Museum...

The B-26 Invader has performed above and beyond the call of duty covering a period of years since WW II

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and encompassing the entire life span of some crews who flew it here in Vietnam. If ever an old warhorse deserved a place in our Air Force Museum, I submit the name of 'Old Indestructible' for B-26 Serial Number 4434539, mounting fourteen .50 cal machine ~~guns~~ and equipped with a Flintstone Mark I and Flintstone Mark II bombsights as a worthy representative of the breed...

At the time the B-26's were being cleared for shipment to Clark AB the T-28's at Bien Hoa were also showing signs of buckling and wrinkled wings. Pilots of these aircraft were getting leary about taking them up into the air.<sup>99</sup> One T-28 flown by Captain Edwin Gerald Shank, Jr on 24 March \* crashed on an interdiction mission flown from Soc Trang. After his third bomb pass on the target, Captain Shank's plane was seen to crash. There was evidence of hostile fire in the area which was 8 1/2 miles southwest of Soc Trang. There were no survivors.<sup>100</sup>

To allay the doubts of his pilots, Colonel Preston asked for help in the form of structural and aeronautical engineers and stress analyst experts from the McClellan AFB depot in California and the North American Aviation Co. In forwarding this request, PACAF asked that the experts come over as soon as possible because of the seriousness of the problem and the adverse impact on current operations.<sup>101</sup> Lectures by these T-28 experts who arrived in late March, and an analysis of past losses gave the pilots who would continue to fly the aging aircraft a

\* The major controversy stirred up by Captain Shank's letters to his wife, and their publication, will not be covered in this history except to note the comment of his commander, Colonel Preston, who said: "I question the ethics and moral integrity of the editors of these publications and in my opinion, they rendered a disservice to the nation by the slanted and distorted picture which they painted." Secret End of Tour Report by Col. Preston, July 1964.

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first hand knowledge of the design limits on the T-28 and told them what to look for as signs of overstress. This cleared the air quite a bit and was a boost to pilot morale. In addition, on the recommendation of these engineers, five of the oldest and most war-weary T-28's of the 1st ACS were put into flyable storage until they could be sent through an IRAN program. <sup>102.</sup>

With the retirement of these five T-28's and the loss of all the B-26 force, the 2d AD was down to eight strike aircraft in its 1st Air Commande Squadron in the second week of April. Since the first A-1E's scheduled for the 1st ACS were not due to arrive till late July, there was an urgent need for a strike aircraft to fill the gap. Accordingly, 2d AD requested that nine T-28B's be loaned to the 1st ACS by the Vietnamese Air Force. On 20 April, CINCPAC notified the Chief, MAAG, Vietnam, that the temporary loan of nine T-28B's to the 2d AD be made as it was considered to be in the best interest of both the Republic of Vietnam and the United States. Such a loan would enable continuation of the war effort at existing or increased tempo while the VNAF pilots were being transitioned to the A-1E's they were receiving. The aircraft were to be made available to the 2d AD before 1 May and they would not be kept longer than 1 August 1964. <sup>103.</sup>

These relatively new and lightly used T-28's brought the 1st ACS up to its strength again and in May, it was back in business. They would fill the gap until the arrival of the long awaited A-1E's scheduled to start coming into Vietnam in June.

#### Arrival of A-1E Aircraft for the 1st Air Commande Squadron

Original plans for the introduction of the A-1E as a replacement for

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the T-28 in RVN called for the first aircraft to arrive in June 1964. At that time, it was proposed to exchange the 13 T-28's assigned to 2d AD for 13 A-1E's. Plans also called for the conversion of the 18 B-26's to the modified B-26K version. 104.

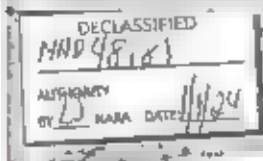
The A-1E modification program in the US was geared to turn out five aircraft in May and eight aircraft every month thereafter until 60 had been processed. The A-1E pilot training capability of the 1st ACW was extremely limited and the scheduled output of four pilots a month on a 90 day pipeline starting in January would give 2d AD its first crews in July and a steady flow thereafter till November. 105.

The B-26K production schedule was for one aircraft to be ready in April 1964, two in May 1964, and four each month thereafter until the 18 were made available to PACAF as replacements for the B-26's in Vietnam. 106.

The grounding of the B-26 in Vietnam in February and the resultant shortage of USAF strike power in RVN changed this schedule. The A-1E replacement conversion program was accelerated to meet immediate operational needs and six A-1E's were programmed for Vietnam in late May with nine more following in late June. A-1E crew training was increased to eight pilots per month for 60 days training with classes starting 1 March and 1 April. The scheduled program for replacing the B-26 force with B-26K's was dropped and 31 A-1E were to replace the 31 authorized aircraft of the 1st Air Command Squadron. This latter decision to replace all the authorized 31 aircraft of the 2d AD with A-1E's was made after a discussion on 12 March 1964 between the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. 107.

To make sure that personnel were available under the compressed

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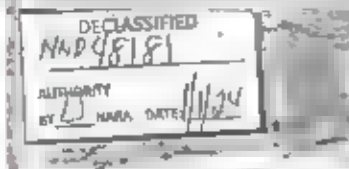
aircraft delivery schedule, PACAF was asked to prepare any T-28 and B-26 pilots with sufficient retainability for training by a SANC training team of four instructors who were being rushed to Vietnam as soon as possible. 108.

With both the B-26 and the T-28 being converted on a one for one basis and with a planned two to one crew ratio, 60 pilots would eventually be required but training was directed to be programmed to meet the minimum of a one for one crew ratio as aircraft were delivered with a rapid buildup to a two to one ratio. 109.

A further increase in the A-1E force in Vietnam, raising it from 30 to 50, was recommended by the Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam in April. The one for one replacement, he said, was inadequate based on battle damage and combat losses which had increased, indicating the need for standard four airplane strike formations. The increase in the number of aircraft, he said, would permit a change in tactics whereby aircraft could be employed in four ship flights (two ship flights were currently used) with two aircraft providing flak suppression and two aircraft striking the target. Four ship flights would provide increased fire power capability on helicopter, train, and convoy escort missions. This would result in across the board improvement in all phases of tactical support to include expanded operations in support of objective currently under consideration. Aircraft would be based at Bien Hoa with deployment to Da Nang, Pleiku, Soc Trang, and New Can Tho for employment as operational requirements dictated. CINCPAC endorsed this proposal for increasing the Farmgate force to 50 A-1E aircraft and requested JCS approval. 110.

On 6 May, the JCS notified the Chief of Staff, USAF, that the 2d AD

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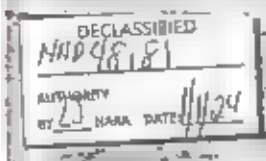
authorization of 31 A-1E's had been raised to 50 for two squadrons of 25 A-1E's each. The Chief of Naval Operations was to provide the aircraft. <sup>111</sup>.

On 30 May, the first six A-1E's arrived at Bien Hoa with Lt. Col. John M. Porter, new commander of the 1st Air Commando Squadron, leading the flight in from the Subic Bay Naval Air Station in the Philippines. According to Colonel Preston, the commander at Bien Hoa, the arrival marked a turning point in "the affairs and fortunes" of the 34th Tactical Group. He added: <sup>112</sup>.

...We have now moved up into the big leagues of COIN warfare circles with a first-line aircraft. Our capacity for ordnance delivery has quadrupled and our versatility in load options and wider choice of tactics has raised our level of performance so far above our former standards that it puts us on a completely different plane of operations. The side by side seating arrangement and dual controls of the A-1E are perfect for instructing VNAF pilots and the cargo/passenger compartment gives all kinds of options for deployment planning. Its flying characteristics are superb for this kind of work. It is rock solid and steady, smoothly responsive, and as comfortable to fly as grandfather's rocking chair. Control and landing speeds is smooth and positive. The Navy pilots call it "Old Reliable" and this is exactly the impression the airplane gives you. Glancing from these new aircraft to some of my scarred up old F-26 veterans, convinces me of one thing - I was either too early or too late - it was fun trying...

Lt. Col. John M. Porter, the new 1st ACS commander also had high words of praise for the A-1E, saying that it was very capable for a situation such as that existing in Vietnam. He pointed out, however, that in Vietnam, the USAF and VNAF had complete freedom of air and that if this were not the case, something else would be needed. "We need an air-

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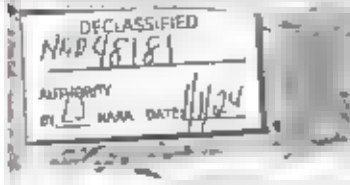
craft which can fly low and slow with some self-protection from an air enemy," he said. To pattern everything after the situation in Vietnam, he added, would be wrong because the same situation might not exist in other areas where the USAF had to carry out a counterinsurgency role. 113.

Colonel Porter pointed out the psychological value of the A-1E in operations against the Viet Cong and also its impact upon the pilots of the VNAF who had begun taking over the second seat on 1 June. In the past, the rider in the second seat was usually not a pilot but a Vietnamese airman. "We operate with 5000-5500 pounds of bombs," Colonel Porter said, "and they never saw firepower quite like this." He quoted a VNAF pilot who observed a strike mission by the A-1E and remarked "I thought they'd never stop going off." Colonel Porter added: "When the Viet Cong see power like that, they know we mean business." 114.

A third squadron of A-1E's, raising the total strength in Vietnam, to 75, was requested by MACV early in May. An increase in air requests, in ARVN attacks, and the general upward trend in air support were cited as the reasons. The 75 aircraft flying 30 sorties each per month would produce 2250 sorties, 90% of them combat sorties producing 2025 combat sorties a month. The VNAF with its three A-1E squadrons could fly about 25 sorties each per month with 90% combat sorties totalling 1688 per month. The combined total of 3913 sorties a month would allow for 4.4 sorties for each request expected to be received. It was felt that six sorties per request was realistic. 115.

The phase-out of the last T-28 on 30 June ended an important era in the Air Force history in Vietnam. The T-28 and the B-26 had carried the major burden of the USAF combat role since 1961 when the Air Force first

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arrived. Since 1 January 1961, six USAF personnel were killed in the T-28, all due to other than hostile action although in one case, the plane might have been overstressed while under enemy ground fire. There were 19 Air Force fatalities in the B-26 bombers, 13 of which were attributed to enemy action, two to structural failure, and four to other causes. As of 30 May, when these figures were released by the Defense Department, air crashes accounted for 136 of the total 227 US fatalities in Vietnam. 116.

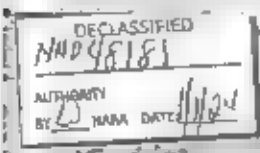
#### Improving the VNAF Strike Capability

A new organization for the VNAF was drawn up in late December 1963 following the coup and the appointment of Colonel Nguyen Ky as VNAF commander. Under the new organization, the VNAF would have four composite wings consisting of T-28's, A-1H's, helicopters, and liaison craft. One composite wing would be stationed in each of the four corps areas at Da Nang, Pleiku, Bien Hoa, and Can Tho. It was expected that two wings would be in place at Da Nang and Bien Hoa by March and the others after completion of facilities at Pleiku and Can Tho.

This new VNAF organization was incorporated in the Chien Thang National Pacification Plan which was implemented by the Khanh regime following the 30 January coup. Geared to an increased pace of the RVNAF war effort, it called for a sizeable expansion in the strength of the VNAF from the 182 aircraft it possessed in January 1964. Of immediate importance was the proposed increase in fighter strength.

In March, the program for a third VNAF squadron of A-1H's (scheduled to replace a T-28 squadron) was pushed up two months. CINCPAC, on

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22 March, notified the JCS that he had taken action to move up the schedule so that 16 A-1H's would arrive in Vietnam around 1 May and the remaining nine on 15 May. The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, planned to send a training/maintenance unit to train Vietnamese pilots and mechanics until the VNAF could assume full operational and maintenance responsibility which was estimated at three to six months. This US Navy training unit of four support officers, eight instructor pilots and 150 enlisted men, was due to arrive in Vietnam along with the first 19 aircraft. 117.

The first increment of 19 airplanes arrived at Bien Hoa on 30 April along with the Navy training detachment. The remaining nine arrived on 10 May. On 4 May, 14 VNAF pilots and 60 maintenance personnel began training. The syllabus called for 15 to 20 hours of flying training for experienced pilots and 30 to 40 hours flight time for those requiring a more comprehensive syllabus. The pilot and maintenance training program was scheduled for completion on 1 July. 118.

By 1 July, the VNAF would have 90 A-1H pilots with another 17 due to return from the US on 15 September. A decision to add another squadron of A-1H's to VNAF strength by October plus a Secretary of Defense instruction that there should be a two to one crew ratio made the question of training VNAF A-1H pilots very important. In May, the total number of VNAF pilots was 473 assigned on a one to one crew ratio basis. 119. A two to one crew ratio for the A-1H would require 200 pilots. This could be done by converting in-country 31 VNAF T-28 pilots and 62 VNAF C-47 pilots. However, the conversion of C-47 pilots would mean bringing back the USAF for this job or getting third country replacements. Converting

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RT-28 pilots would also require USAF personnel to fill the gap. Therefore the job of training was most important. Although it recognized that the expansion of the VNAF force would greatly increase the air capability in RVN, PACAF was aware that the process would be comparatively slow and that a rapid expansion would be handicapped to some degree by the lack of immediately available trained manpower. The number of RVNAF personnel who could assimilate technical training was relatively small and the process of conversion would take time.<sup>120</sup>

Another factor bearing on the immediate capability of the VNAF for vigorous prosecution of the war was the fact that the VNAF in the past had averaged flying about one-half the number of sorties per aircraft flown by the 1st ACS. The USAF unit flew 90% of the time on combat sorties. The VNAF had to spend much of its time on check-outs and up-grade training, reducing the availability of pilots for combat missions. The USAF operating record, however, did serve as a model to the VNAF in attaining proficiency and motivation.<sup>121</sup> By October of 1964, the VNAF was scheduled to have its four squadrons of A-1H's, one assigned to each of four tactical wings located in the four corps areas.<sup>122</sup>

An even greater increase in the VNAF fighter capability was proposed by MACV in May when there appeared to be a general recognition of the increasing importance of air operations in the counterinsurgency effort. On 28 May, MACV requested that the VNAF be equipped with three additional A-1H squadrons, which, added to the three already in existence, would make a total of six squadrons. This called for a major training program by the 1st ACS and the USN VA 152 training unit at Bien Hoa. Assuming approval of this recommendation for three more VNAF squadrons, MACV felt

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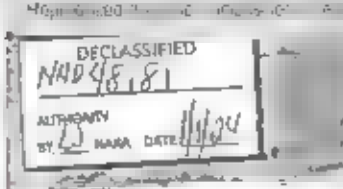
that the 1st ACS with its 50 A-1E's would be fully utilized into the first quarter of FY66. A study was being prepared to determine the requirements for retention of the 1st ACS fighter aircraft after the first quarter of FY66. 123

#### In-Country Training of Helicopter Pilots for the VNAF

An impressive example of the capability of the USAF to provide in-country training for foreign national was the program begun in January 1963 to satisfy a serious shortage of VNAF helicopter pilots and mechanics. As the result of a survey completed by Air Training Command on 31 October 1962, CINCPAC approved the deployment of the 917H Field Training Detachment to Vietnam for 24 months to train 60 helicopter pilots and 45 helicopter mechanics for duty with the Vietnamese Air Force. This was the first time a helicopter training program had been established outside the United States. Such in-country training, it was felt, would allow pilots to be trained in a much shorter time than was the case with six VNAF pilots who were being trained in the US. By giving the training in Vietnam, no security clearance would be required nor would the students need to attend the United States Air Force Language School. 124.

In January 1963, Lt. Col. Jimmy M. Hammill, the commander, nine other officers and 47 airmen arrived at Tan Son Nhut from the 3635th Flying Training Wing at Stead AFB to begin training the first class of 15 cadets who arrived on 21 January. Nine UH-19 aircraft which were in storage at Bien Hoa were used as training vehicles. The pilot program consisted of 75 hours of flying training, 185 hours of academics on flying and 360 hours of helicopter mechanics. 125.

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The most severe problem facing the instructors was the lack of English comprehension among Vietnamese students. Only about 75% of classroom instruction and 50% of instruction over the aircraft interphone was considered effective. Nevertheless, the first class of 15 cadets graduated on schedule on 14 June 1963.<sup>126</sup>

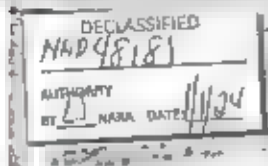
In June 1963, the Secretary of Defense ordered the training unit to be doubled to handle an increased training program. The second class had 30 students and began training on 26 June. Thirty VNAF helicopter mechanics started schooling on 1 July. Twenty-five of the 30 student pilots and 29 of the 30 mechanics graduated on 29 November.

An accelerated training program was begun with the third class of 30 student pilots and 32 mechanics which began on 9 December. This class graduated 29 pilots and 32 mechanics on 11 April after only four months instead of the five months for previous classes. Average flying time for students was 73.56. At this accelerated pace, it was apparent to the new detachment commander, Lt. Col. Francis M. Carney, who arrived on 4 January, that the whole training program could be wound up by the end of July.

The last class of 30 aviation cadets and 32 mechanics started on 27 April and finished on 8 July, well ahead of schedule. Twenty-six pilots and 31 mechanics graduated.

Thus, in a year and a half, the highly professional 917H Field Training Detachment had placed 98 helicopter pilots and 102 helicopter mechanics in the Vietnamese Air Force. This was a considerable accomplishment considering the conditions under which training was conducted. Not only was

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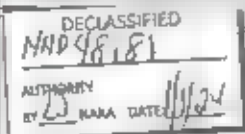
this the first time a helicopter training unit had worked outside the United States but the training was conducted under hazardous climatic conditions and under hostile ground fire. Three aircraft were hit by enemy fire in the course of normal student training. The unit was recommended for the Outstanding Unit Award.

#### Introduction of B-57's to Vietnam

The grounding of the B-26's and the increasing vulnerability of aircraft to VC ground fire led PACAF in February to request consideration of the introduction of jets to Vietnam. In the 90 days before 20 February, more than 100 USAF and VNAF aircraft had been destroyed or damaged by the Viet Cong using up to .50 cal. weapons. This was expected to get more serious as the tempo of the war increased. The introduction of jets, namely the B-57, would improve tactical effectiveness as well as work psychologically against the VC. In Vietnam, there were 40 pilots with jet training. 127.

In arguing for the B-57, PACAF said that it had significant conventional armament loads, ground loiter time, dual engine safety factor, decreased ground environmental requirements, and was available in the theater due to reductions in Japan. The B-57 was a highly maneuverable stable gun platform and an excellent conventional weapons delivery vehicle. It could arrive over a target 100 nm distant in 20 minutes compared with 35 minutes for aircraft currently used. It could remain over the target longer and deliver ordnance comparable to in-country aircraft. Use of the B-57 would offset the serious loss strike power due to B-26 structural problems for which there appeared to be no easy fix. The B-57, said PACAF, was necessary to reverse the present situation in RVN which was deteriorat-

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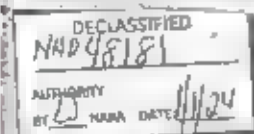
ing significantly. 128.

The question of restrictions on the use of jet aircraft was answered by PACAF. It noted that the use of F-102's and F-101's in the past had not led the communists to escalate the war. The B-57 was no more restricted by terms of the 1954 Geneva agreement than the Army jet-powered helicopters. Besides, the US was not a signatory to the Geneva accords. Should the communists reply with their own airlift and supply vehicles, US radar in the area was adequate to identify any such craft. 129.

The suggestion to introduce B-57's was presented to the Secretary of Defense at the 6 March Honolulu Conference. He said that he did not approve their use although he appreciated the need for action. He directed Maj. Gen. Ballin H. Anthis, former 2d AD commander, to see what could be done about expediting repair of B-26's and to recommend a suitable prep job to replace them in Farngate. 130.

In May, the first action was taken to prepare VNAF pilots for the B-57. CINCPAC was asked by the JCS to recommend a date to start training VNAF crews at Clark AB in case the B-57 were approved for Farngate use. 131. Out of nine VNAF pilots who already had 50 or more hours in T-33 jet time, PACAF recommended that six be given 15 hours flying training per pilot in a four week period, starting on 15 May. The cost of training was estimated at \$17,754.00. 132. This recommendation was forwarded to the JCS and on 9 May CINCPAC was directed to go ahead and give B-57 indoctrination training to the six VNAF pilots. The State Department had concurred and was telling the Philippine Government. 133.

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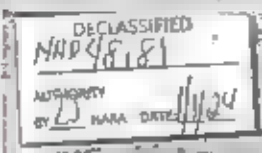
### Retention of 19th TASS Using VNAF T-28's

Transfer of the 19 O-1F liaison aircraft of the 19th TASS at Bien Hoa to the VNAF was decided upon by MACV in March but subsequent events altered this arrangement. The VNAF program called for four liaison units, the fourth to be equipped from US in-theater resources. MACV, faced with the choice of transferring the aircraft of the US Army 73rd Aviation Company or the 19th TASS, chose the Air Force's aircraft in spite of objections by the Chief, AF Section, MAAG and the Commander 2d AD. The Air Force was in a difficult position regarding retention of the 19th TASS because of a statement made by the Secretary of Defense in October 1963 in which he indicated that the introduction of the 19th TASS into RVN was unnecessary and a mistake on his part. <sup>134</sup>

In April, the 2d AD and 13th AF prepared a proposal to MACV that the 19th TASS be retained in RVN as a unit to fly excess VNAF T-28's in a FAC role. The T-28's were being made available to the 1st ACS as interim replacements for the grounded B-26's until the A-1E's arrived. After the arrival of the A-1E's, the transferred VNAF T-28's would be excess and therefore available for use by the 19th TASS. <sup>135</sup> It was anticipated that the 19th TASS could fulfill FAC mission requirements beyond the capability of the VNAF with 15 excess VNAF T-28's.

On 10 June, the matter was still not firm and although the O-1F's of the 19th TASS had been identified for transfer to the VNAF, no date for transfer had yet been established. During the visit of the Secretary of Defense to Saigon in May, guidance was issued to expand the VNAF. In preparing to do this, 2d AD prepared a plan which included a recommendation to retain the 19th TASS with O-1 aircraft. <sup>136</sup> This plan was approved

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by COMUSMACV and forwarded to CINCPAC for action. PACAF's plans, in the event the J-1's were transferred to VNAF was to use the manpower of the 19th TASS to maintain and operate the RT-28/RC-47 aircraft of the VNAF Reconnaissance Squadron. At such time as the VNAF air and ground crews were trained and available to operation of the unit, the 19th TASS would be disestablished. Because of the guidance of the Secretary of Defense in May, PACAF believed that a firm requirement existed to continue the 19th TASS in PACAF for a minimum of one year. It could operate the O-1F's it possessed or VNAF RT-28's and RC-47's if the O-1F's were transferred.<sup>137</sup>

#### Development in the Tactical Air Control System

The Tactical Air Control System was established in Vietnam in January 1962, tailored to the peculiarities and operational requirements of the insurgent situation. Its mission was to provide the commander of the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, and US and RVN air commanders an "effective and quick reacting means for planning, directing, coordinating and controlling air operations in the Republic of Vietnam". The TACS also sought to establish and implement procedures for planning and employing the tactical air effort, both in training and in performing the operational tasks of counter-air, interdiction, close air support tactical air reconnaissance, air defense, airlift operations and special air operations in Vietnam. Also, the job of the people in the TACS was to advise and train VNAF personnel in its operation through a parallel command and organizational arrangement with the objective of having them eventually take it over. <sup>138</sup> This was the first time where both the host country and US air resources were employed simultaneously in counterinsurgency operations.

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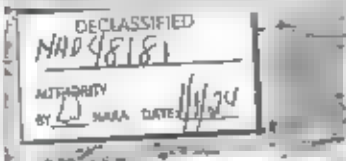
The details on the organization and function of the TACS have been included in previous historical reports\* and will be only briefly covered here. The system consisted of an Air Operations Center at Tan Son Nhut, four Air Support Operations Centers, (one for each corps area) one Sub-Air Support Operations Center (SOC) at Tan Son Nhut, and three Control and Reporting Posts (CRP's) at Da Nang, Pleiku, and Ban Me Thout. Air Liaison Officers (ALO's) were assigned to each of the nine ARVN divisions and one to each corps headquarters, airborne brigade, special forces headquarters, PBT special zone, and the AOC. Forward Air Controllers, (FAC's) usually captains, were assigned to Army units throughout Vietnam.

This was a TACS modelled on classic lines which included the manning and equipment necessary to plan, direct, and coordinate air operations within an area of some 300 by 500 miles. It scheduled operations over a 24 hour period on a daily basis and had the inherent capability to direct the employment of over 500 aircraft and the sorties generated there from on a sustained basis. This capacity was considerably greater than the load assigned to it in 1963.

In a study conducted in the latter part of 1963 by the Air Force Test Unit - Vietnam, an effort was made to evaluate the system and come up with means for making it more responsive to the needs of the theater. The system was studied for the three month period, 1 June through 31 August 1963 and the final report was submitted on 25 February 1964. One of the major problem areas studied by the team was the time taken by the TACS to react to immediate requests. Although the average reaction time for TACS to plan,

\* See History, 2d AD, 15 November 1961 - 8 October 1962, Ch. IV, 2001-H

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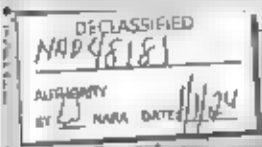
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coordinate and direct the necessary action for each immediate request was 7.3 minutes, the overall reaction time from the time the ground commander initiated the request till the aircraft was on target was one hour, 40.9 minutes. It took an average of 44.7 minutes to process the initial request through the Army Air Ground System (AAGS) and 48.9 minutes for the tactical aircraft to scramble, rendezvous, and fly to the target. 139.

To cut this overall time down, the team studying the TACS recommended a system whereby the ASOC could be notified in advance of the official request, thus letting ASOC plan and coordinate the mission details in advance, alert the flying unit, and if desired, scramble or divert aircraft in the time period when the original request was being run through official AAGS channels. Using this procedure, it was possible that the plane could be over the target by the time ASOC got the official request. There was, of course, the danger that the request might be disapproved at intermediate levels or delayed so long that the aircraft, if scrambled, would not have sufficient endurance to stay in the target area. This was felt to be outweighed by the advantage of improved reaction time and the inherent capability of striking secondary or ALPIT (Alternate Low Priority Interdiction Target) targets. Up to 41 minutes of the average 48.9 minutes required for the tactical aircraft response was out in one instance where the ASOC received advance warning. 140.

The team found that the TACS was capable of centrally directing and controlling all the activities involved with the employment of the air resources committed to the system. No instance of interference or lack of coordination between VNAF and USAF operations was found even though VNAF units were VNAF-controlled and USAF units USAF-controlled,

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However, the team pointed out, less than half the military aircraft in RVN were committed to, or controlled by the TACS. It found that the number of aircraft not committed was increasing in relation to the number controlled by TACS. The team's report added: 141.

...The large number of sorties not controlled by the TACS constituted a flying safety hazard and frequently interfered with tactical operations. It is contrary to the accepted principle of unit command to have air forces operating in the same area under separate and unilateral command. MACV Directive 44 denotes cognizance of the need for unity of command; however, it established decentralized organizations with air resources which duplicate and contravene TACS functions.

Some 18 cases where the lack of coordination resulted in hazardous flying conditions or firing on friendly forces were included in the report.

The team considered the need in Vietnam to have Forward Air Controllers in the air and not on the ground as was the case in Korea and World War II. In Vietnam, the thick jungle covered mountains in the north and the flat and often flooded delta area in the south made observation from the ground very difficult. ARVN ground commanders considered the airborne FAC much more effective and responsive than ground controllers. However, the employment of the O-1A and other light aircraft as an airborne FAC vehicle had disadvantages as well as advantages. To the experienced VC, the presence of a liaison aircraft in the area indicated that strike aircraft could be expected. As a result, he often terminated or cancelled attacks or ambushes without the actual deployment of strike aircraft to the scene. The VC seldom attacked or exposed himself when he faced the threat of air attack. This tendency to withdraw, disperse, or take cover upon seeing a light aircraft took away the

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advantage of surprise when the VC concentration was the designated target. Often these concentrations of Viet Cong were reported through intelligence, political, or special forces sources, but the opportunity to inflict maximum casualties, through the employment of strike aircraft, was degraded by the requirement for aerial FAC control and direction of each air strike.<sup>142</sup>

Problems concerning the reliability of flight-following and traffic control were also considered. In Vietnam, this was complicated by the fact that the TACS was only one of several agencies controlling aircraft. Also, some of the radar sites used in the task of traffic control were installed at sites selected for security reasons rather than for optimum radar performance. Further, because strike and FAC aircraft operated at altitudes below the CRP's radio and radar reception range and because radio frequency limitations existed both at the CRP and in the tactical aircraft, it was often impossible for the directing agency of the TACS to contact aircraft during strike operations in these areas. These were mainly problems of equipment and facilities on which considerable action was taken in 1964. This will be discussed later in this history.<sup>143</sup>

Air-ground communications equipment compatibility was considered by the reporting team to be the most severe limitation since establishment of the TACS in January 1962. The problem developed because most of the equipment made available to Vietnamese ground forces was frequency modulated (FM) while airborne equipment was amplitude modulated (AM), the two types not being compatible. As an interim solution, the USAF in 1962 took action to equip USAF and VNAF aircraft with the AN/ARC-44, making it compatible with ground radios. All aircraft were not expected to be fitted until September 1963. Other communications

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problems cited were ground power generating units which burned out due to frequent power surges, field wire (WD-1/TT) which rapidly deteriorated in the Vietnamese climate, and the non-availability of communications equipment for elements of the overall TACS. 144.

There was a problem in target marking which also drew the team's attention. Smoke grenades and bombs went off on the jungle floor and failed to penetrate the dense foliage or failed to operate in mud and water. Air bursts likewise had been ineffective when premature detonation occurred above tree top level. Test results obtained by the Combat and Development and Test Center, Vietnam, revealed that the MK 5 and MK 6 parachute flares provided the best available means of marking targets in jungle areas. The flares were carried and released from the external racks of the O-1A aircraft. Pre-setting the fuse allowed the chute to deploy at tree top level sending up a dense pillar of smoke and a high intensity light visible for more than five miles for approximately three minutes. Another satisfactory method of target marking was by use of the 3.5" white phosphorus rocket head fired by a 2.75" rocket motor. This latter device was recommended for use by the VNAF. 145.

Several other aspects of the TACS were covered in this extensive report but the main evaluation was of the effectiveness of the base system. The team concluded the system was effective for control of air resources in RVN, including air defense, counter air, interdiction, close air support, tactical air reconnaissance, search and rescue, logistic air support, flight following, and special operations. It was effective for planning, directing and controlling air operations RVN and responsive to operational requirements. Its potential effectiveness

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was not being fully realized because of communications problems, shortages of qualified and experienced VNAF personnel, restraints placed on the VNAF, and restraints placed on USAF air resources. The TACS had adequate capacity to coordinate all military air resources in Vietnam. No modification of the TACS concept or basic structure was believed necessary to adapt it to the RVN environment.

The report, signed by Maj. Gen. Moore, recommended that the military air resources in RVN be employed by the respective air commanders through the Tactical Air Control System. It also recommended that the training of the VNAF in the TACS operation be accelerated as much as the availability of qualified trainees would permit. 146.

Problems concerning the two systems of air control in Vietnam were also receiving attention from the JCS in Washington. On 1 February 1964, JCS asked CINCPAC to answer several questions which had been raised in a recent JCS discussion. First, was there an operational requirement for two systems in Vietnam in view of the emphasis being placed by CINCPAC on coordination of USA air and ground operations? Was there a lack of proper coordination of USA and VNAF/USAF air and if so, what were the causes and what was being done about it? Was the US Army represented in the AOC or the ASOC's and if not, why not? Did ARVN commanders really know who to look to for advice on aviation and who provides this information? To what extent did the existing air control system permit conflicting advice to the RVNAF? Did the systems in operation lend themselves to the smooth turnover to the RVNAF upon departure of the US? Finally, were there practical operational problems peculiar to RVN that restricted the optimum use of tactical air and if so,

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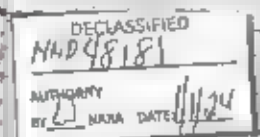
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what were they? 147.

In passing these questions on to the Commander, USMACV, CINCPAC presented his thoughts on the subject. Air support in Vietnam was not as effective as it should be, he said. While the cooperation and coordination at the fighting level appeared to be excellent, the situation in Saigon left much to be desired. "This may be due to the Air Force-Army doctrinal argument being waged," he added. Other reasons which he listed for the "ineffective use of air" were: (1) The air request net was too slow considering the fleeting nature of targets, especially those at hamlet level, mainly because there were too many intervening headquarters; (2) Airborne communications were complicated by the incompatibility of radios used in ground support; (3) USAF ALO's were not readily available at sufficiently low level with the ARVN; they should be located at regimental or brigade level and even lower for particular operations; (4) qualified ground liaison officers were lacking in the AOC and at Bien Hoa where Farngate operations were carried out; (5) the number of interdiction missions was high in comparison with close support missions although close support missions could have a greater impact; (6) the recent loss of lives in helicopters downed in water showed the need for Sea Air Rescue operations. CINCPAC directed that MACV call an ad hoc task force to study the problem and make recommendations. 148.

On 17 February 1964, General Paul D. Harkins, commander of MACV, presented his views on the control and allocation of aviation resources in RVN to CINCPAC. He said that the TACS provided for centralized control and decentralized employment of VMF/USAF resources. There were in

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Vietnam, he said, two discrete systems for allocation and control of aviation operating in support of the corps tactical zones. The great bulk of US Army and USMC aviation resources were assigned to ARVN corps in a direct support role. To each of the four aviation headquarters, one to each corps area, were assigned the types and numbers of aircraft calculated to be needed to support the corps under all but extraordinary levels of operational intensity. MACV could change allocations periodically as the tactical situation dictated or when the corps troop base was modified. It was the function of the aviation headquarters to manage all US Army or US Marine aviation units and aircraft operating in direct support of the corps. <sup>149</sup> Aviation units not assigned to the four aviation headquarters included one flight of Mohawks and the UTT helicopter company. Requests for employment of these units were made to the JOC and when committed, operational control of these units passed to the corps aviation headquarters. <sup>1</sup>

The commander, MACV believed that the two systems were in accord with USAF and US Army concepts for allocation, control and employment of air resources. "Thus far," he said, "I have felt no compulsion to alter materially US service concepts in the situation for several reasons". These reasons were: <sup>150</sup>

...First, as set forth below, the two systems are compatible. .

Second, as a result of decisions long since taken, the Vietnamese force structure concentrates all air resources in its air arm; and one of my missions is to insure the air arm will be trained to operate effectively when US special assistance is terminated. This is being accomplished by the 2d Air Div and the Air Section, MAAG, in combination. The TACS, as a control and communications facility,

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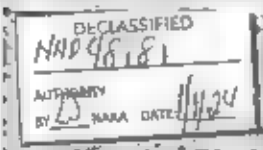
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looks large in the program, constituting both an operational and a training vehicle. A principle objective is to insure, when US forces depart, a smoothly functioning VNAF manned TACS.

Third, since the USA/USMC aviation units are wholly US special assistance and have no role in the development of the Vietnamese air structure, I have been free to employ them as I see fit to maximize support of the ground effort. The US Army and USMC concepts are peculiarly well suited to the requirements of the counterinsurgency effort here in Vietnam.

"There is", General Harkins said, "an operational requirement for two systems of control, adequately coordinated one with the other." Existing procedures provided for proper coordination of supporting air even though the two systems differed in methods of allocation and control. Specific coordination problems did arise. "As in any war", he said, "human beings under combat pressure are involved, radio communications are interrupted or not established, and language difficulties recur." Neither US Army nor US Marine aviation was represented in the AOC because experience had shown that when any Army aviator was assigned to the AOC, he could provide no operational information that was not more readily available, through other USA/USMC aviation channels to the ASOC's which had the primary need for the information. 151.

In the area of advising the ARVN on the employment of aviation, the responsibilities for advising on the use of the two categories of air resources were well defined, General Harkins said. The 2d AD AIO's and FAC's at corps, division, and regiment level, were qualified tactical fighter pilots advising the appropriate ARVN commander on the use of VNAF/USAF resources. Conversely, the senior army advisors at these echelons advised on use of USA/USMC aviation. Below the regimental level, the US Army

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advisor was the only one to whom the ARVN or paramilitary commander could look to for advice. This advice at battalion level usually related to immediate close support. There had been instances, he added, where AIO's had not been included in ARVN planning conferences, either due to oversight or absence. Where this happened, Army advisors had to speak on the subject of tactical air employment and although they were patently less qualified than their Air Force colleagues, they were certainly not prone to downgrade tactical air when there was a battle ahead. However, having been brought up in the Army, their understanding of air support was primarily from the fox hole view. Also, where there was a choice of using the Air Force or Army system, the decision had to be predicated more on estimated speed of response than any other factor. In this regard the ARVN operated air request channel to ASOC is much more cumbersome than the path to USA/USMC resources. 152.

General Harkins cited the impact of the USA/USMC system on the Vietnamese Armed Forces. "I would point out," he said, "that ARVN officers prefer the USA/USMC procedures for employment of aviation elements and most are convinced that helicopters and liaison aircraft, as a minimum, should be part of ARVN." It was distinctly possible that the high command might effect reorganization, or at least, modify the allocation features on the TACS. 153.

General Harkins then noted some of the operational problems associated with air support. Because of the need for each successive ARVN echelon to approve and retransmit a request, there were cases on record where pre-planned requests for air had taken over 24 hours to arrive at the corps TOC and immediate requests have taken over three hours. However,

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once the request was passed to the ASOC<sup>2</sup> the aircraft - and particularly USAF - were airborne with a minimum of delay.<sup>3</sup> The problem of communications shortages cited in the TACS report was also listed as a degrading factor by General Harkins. There was also a lack of teamwork between the ARVN and the VNAF, partly because the VNAF pilot production program was strained to meet cockpit requirements and consequently had not been able to provide ALO's. Several steps were being taken, however, to improve mutual ground-air teamwork. USAF advisory personnel in the TACS were being increased from 49 to 75. A USAF colonel was being added to MACV representation at the High Command to provide improved guidance to the field on employment of tactical air. A USA adviser was being detailed to the 34th Tactical Group at Bien Hoa to function as a ground liaison officer with that unit. 154.

One major obstacle to the most effective and rapid employment of tactical air in response to immediate requests, said General Harkins, was the local rules of engagement requiring the target to be marked by a liaison aircraft with a Vietnamese aboard. These aircraft often had to come from a considerable distance at slow speed. When the VNAF could provide FAC's on the ground with the supported unit who could communicate directly with strike aircraft and employ other means of target designation such as artillery or mortar spotting rounds, this problem would be surmounted. 155.

General Harkins summed up his remarks by saying that the root causes of the real problems in the air support field were operational, not organizational, and that they were in ARVN and VNAF and the interplay between those two. Neither the ARVN nor the VNAF had come of age and

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deficiencies in ground air relationships was but one category of the debit sheet, he said. He added: 156.

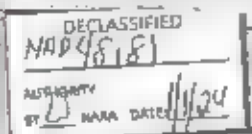
...My aviators - USAF, Army, and Marine - are dedicated, competent, and brave fighting men and are constantly in danger. Their hearts are in this fight and they would like nothing better than further relaxation of the rules, mindful of dead and wounded comrades. True, they believe their respective control systems are best, and I wouldn't want it otherwise. But for all the heat generated in honest argument and the resultant illusion of services at cross-purposes, relations at the operating level are harmonious and have consistently cooperated splendidly when committed to operations. I am proud of their performance...

The recent arrivals of Generals Moore and Westmoreland, who had already developed some views on an overall review of the control problem, made the time propitious, said General Harkins. The two newly arrived generals and others concerned with this problem would have broad latitude. He concluded: 157.

...The procedures in effect here for the employment and control of air support operations reflect the developed doctrines and procedures of the services involved and as I have stressed, they advance the war effort. Yet I am convinced there is a better way, for all of service doctrine is not equally applicable to this counterinsurgency environment. It is quite probable that the time has come to disregard service doctrines, including UNAAF directives in order to produce the most effective method to combat the enemy and the terrain with the men and equipment at hand. This is our first crack at counterinsurgency on a major scale. Unrest in the emerging nations which are the prime targets of communist infiltration indicate that RVN will not be our last. Bold deviations from past procedures may produce a bloody nose or two, but on the other hand, may be the source of truly, significant results.

The soul searching examination of the system for control and allocation of aircraft in Vietnam which took place in 1963 opened the way for improvements in 1964. By bringing into the open the differences which

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existed between the US Army and USAF over the employment of the TACS, the air was cleared for a change. As General Harkins said, the arrival of Generals Moore and Westmoreland with new ideas on the subject, made the time propitious for the change.

By May 1964, several important steps were taken by 2d AD to improve the system for directing VNAF/USAF air strikes on targets. A program for increasing the number of ALO's and FAC's in the field was under way with the command hoping to eventually have a total of 75. By the end of June, the number had grown from 35 to 49 and the quality of the Air Force people going out in the field on this essential task was also improved. With 75 people, there would be Air Force representation on the regimental level and advice on the use of air could be quickly given to the ARVN people who had to make decisions. The problem of communications was being slowly corrected but this was complicated by the fact that there were three different air request systems using different types of equipment and not enough coordination in the past. Most important, however, in terms of long range significance, was the initiation by General Moore, on 15 May 1964, of the VNAF Air Request Net which promised to circumvent the laborious and unresponsive system in existence where quick reaction was delayed by the necessity to move requests through several echelons of command, 158.

The program for increasing the number of ALO's and FAC's in the field from 49 to 75 which was supported by General Harkins was still not approved in June 1964. However, prior to 30 June, the number had been raised from 35 to 49, a substantial increase but still not enough to fill the bill. To improve the FAC system, the Air Force was continuing to train VNAF pilots for the job, 159.

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Communications was a continuing major problem in the effective working of the air request system. The ARVN equipment provided by the US Army suffered from lack of maintenance. \* These were PRC-9 and PRC-10 sets, both FM types. The US Army sets were not always geared to the sets in liaison or strike aircraft, some being UHF and some FM. A major step in correcting this situation was the procurement by the Air Force of the PRC-25, the best set for Vietnam and one which the US Army was also interested in getting. When enough of these were available in the theater and distributed to both Air Force and Army activities, communications were expected to improve by over 100%. The PRC covered all frequencies used in RVN on the air-ground system, making it highly adaptable to the system. 160.

The initiation of a VNAF Air Request Net by General Moore in May offered the greatest hope for getting aircraft on target in time. Although the new net was an augmentation for the existing Tactical Air Control System, as it caught on, it was expected to take over as the primary and only system. The old system just was not responsive enough in many cases to the needs of getting air on the target in time. With the VC starting to use mass group attacks in 1964, he offered a target for air which had to react in a matter of ten minutes, not a half an hour to an hour required by the existing net. The VC had the advantage in ordinary guerrilla warfare. He could pick his target and time for attack. His opponent had

\* Many of these sets were captured by the VC and put to use to divert VNAF and USAF planes from assigned targets to friendly targets. There was several instances of VC's with a command of English issuing directions to USAF pilots.

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to be everywhere, ready for a strike anywhere. The VC, through very effective communications, could summon a battle force of several hundred men in a short time from the rice paddies, make his attack, and then melt back into the rice paddies. To respond to his attack in the short time available, the aircraft had to be deployed in the various corps area where the action was taking place, or they had to be on airborne alert. But just as important, the initial request had to be acted upon quickly. <sup>161.</sup>

This is what the new system was geared for. Instead of relaying a request through regiment and division to the corps and then to the ASOC and AOC, requesters in most cases could go direct to the ASOC. The net was made up of Tactical Air Control Parties (TACP) consisting of USAF and VNAF ALO's and USAF and VNAF radio operators using FM (PRC-25), UHF (PRC-41), and Single Sideband (PRC-47) radios. Tactical Air Control Parties, operating at the regiment or battalion CP could call directly to the ASOC with an immediate request at the same time the request was being transmitted over the ARVN request net. The ASOC would begin immediately to take action to scramble aircraft, coordinating at the same time with the corps TOC for approval. If no disapproval was heard within five minutes from intermediate levels of command, (who would have been monitoring radios and have heard the request being transmitted), the request was considered valid by the ASOC and the corps TOC. This system worked very well for immediate requests. <sup>162.</sup>

Starting in May, the 2d Air Division began briefing US Army and ARVN commanders on the new system. The system was started in the III Corps/7th Division area where the briefing team spent three weeks

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introducing the system to regimental commanders and up. The briefing team led by Major Julius R. Conti of 2d AD included a US Army member, a VNAF member, and an ARVN member. In June, the team visited all National Training Centers and Civil Guard Training Centers. The results of these briefings were almost immediately apparent. Some commanders who had never even thought about the possibilities of air were starting to make requests for it. 163

There were still several problems detracting from the efficiency of the Tactical Air Control System. Communications continued to be a weak area. Getting efficient sets in all the units connected with the system and keeping them properly maintained was a continuing problem. Another major problem was the shortage of liaison aircraft. The number of aircraft available for missions was growing less and less due to poor maintenance and aircraft accidents, as the need for them was increasing. In each corps area, there were not enough liaison aircraft available to cover visual reconnaissance, FAC convoy escort missions and radio relay missions. More L-19 aircraft were required. 164.

The extension of the Tactical Air Control Parties allowing use of the more efficient VNAF Air Request Net would result in a great improvement to the system. On 30 June, there were eight TACP's in IV Corps and 19 in III Corps/7th Div, although these were not quite fully manned. By the end of December, TACP's would be available in I and II Corps as well.

Some progress had been made in the coordination of US Army and USAF/VNAF air operations by the middle of 1964. A US Army officer was assigned to the 2d AD's ALO/FAC section to coordinate all USAF/VNAF flights with US Army flights. Six US Army personnel were positioned in the Air Operations

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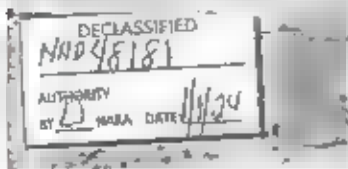
Center to let them have better control of US Army aircraft through use of the AOC's communications facilities. 165.

The improvement in coordination of US Army and USAF air activities was commented upon by the Deputy Director of the Air Operations Center, Lt. Colonel Ray A. Robinson. Colonel Robinson in August 1964, said there was "no lack of proper coordination" between the two services and that both realized that each had a role to play in the counterinsurgency effort. Colonel Robinson added; "Before, both services tried to fight the war using their own air capabilities, but now we're working together." 166

The most tangible evidence of the improved coordination of air activities lay in a directive being jointly prepared by the 2d AD and the US Army support Command, Vietnam, in July. This set up procedures to improve US Army, US Marine and USAF/VNAF coordination in order "to provide maximum air support to ground forces." Under the new rules laid down in this directive, US Army Aviation Elements (AAE) at corps level would be co-located with the ASOC to take advantage of ASOC communications and to improve coordination between Army/Marine and USAF/VNAF air activities. Aircraft from VNAF/USAF sources would be allocated to the corps ASOC under the TACS for operational mission in the Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ). US Army and Marine Corps aircraft would be assigned to the operational control of the Senior Corps Advisor. The Corps Tactical Operations Center (CTOC), the ASOC, and the AAE (representing the Senior Corps Advisor) would together provide the air support and Army aviation in line with priorities and tasks determined by the corps commander. 167.

Once a day and more often if necessary, joint and combined preplanning of air support would be conducted at the division and corps TOC's with the

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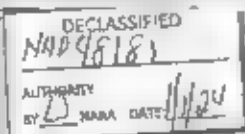
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AIO, ASOC, and AAE taking part. The corps advisors would insure that preplanning took into account the use of air support for all ground operations. Starting at the battalion and task force levels of command, plans for movement of convoys and trains, ground recon, security, and counter-attack units would include provisions for using the "available air support as appropriate to the mission." 168.

In planning for the use of available aircraft, missions would be assigned in the following order of priority: (1) The relief of units or posts under attack, (2) the support of reaction forces dispatched to assist an area or unit under attack, including the scrambling of ground alert aircraft or the diversion of airborne aircraft, (3) offensive, pre-planned, search and destroy operations, and (4) support of the routine movement of an independent ground force, convoy, or train. 169.

Under this joint 2d AD/USASCV directive, ground reaction forces would not normally be moved without air support. Depending upon the requirements of the particular situation at hand, the use of O-1 aircraft, airborne CP helicopters, armed helicopters, or fighter aircraft would be considered. O-1 aircraft or helicopters would reconnoiter the route of the reaction force and if this force were attacked, armed helicopters on the scene were to engage the enemy in such a way that he would be placed in position or immobilized until the arrival of the more heavily armed fighters. The CP helicopter or other aircraft on the scene would request fighter aircraft and if these fighter aircraft were not available in sufficient numbers, additional armed helicopters would be employed. For the escort of independent ground forces and convey or train movements, O-1's would be given primary consideration but armed helicopters would be used in conjunction

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with these O-1's as much as practicable. If no O-1's were available armed helicopters could be used as a substitute. Should there be neither O-1's or armed helicopters available, A-1E's and A-1H's would be used to provide air support if the convoys were attacked. 170.

The matter of control of strike aircraft was also included in the joint directive. Normally, strike aircraft would be directed by a Forward Air Controller, either airborne or on the ground. The FAC could use any type of control aircraft or vehicle for this purpose so long as appropriate communications were established and maintained. However, if a FAC were not available, the ground commander could assume the responsibility for designating the target to the strike aircraft by any available means of communication or target direction. 171.

Finally, the joint directive specified that Army aviation communications would be tied into the CTOC/ASCC/A&E complex "as necessary to assure that coordination of air activities is maintained." The air request net and control communications channels would not change. Existing SOI's would be revised to include a list of frequencies available to ARVN ground, VNAF strike, Army Aviation, Marine Aviation, USAF flare, and the VNAF, VN, and Army air support request nets. 172.

This joint directive, signed by Maj. General Joseph H. Moore, commander of the 2d Air Division, and Brig. General Delk M. Oden, the Commanding General of USASCV, marked a major step forward in the employment of air resources in the Vietnam counterinsurgency effort. It was expected to eliminate many of the problem areas which existed prior to 1964 when the US Army and the USAF were in competition with each other

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to some extent as regards the employment of close support aircraft. It represented a compromise by both sides but it was, as Colonel Robinson put it, the result of "a realization by both services that both rotary aircraft and fixed wing aircraft had a role to play in the counterinsurgency effort." 173.

#### Reorganization of US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

A major reorganization of the command elements of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, was made effective on 15 May 1964. Under this reorganization, the COMUSMACV assumed all the missions and functions performed by the Military Assistance and Advisory Group, Vietnam. The Air Force Section, MAAG, was redesignated the Air Force Advisory Group and placed under the operational control of the 2d Air Division. The Army Section was made directly responsible to MACV. The Navy Section was renamed the Navy Advisory Group the change was made primarily to eliminate duplication of functions. 174.

The MACV plan for reorganization was drawn up on 3 March and passed through coordination channels to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for approval which was received on 10 April. Earlier, on 17 February 1964, COMUSMACV had recommended to CINCPAC that no change in the MACV/MAAG organization be made. He said that positive MACV direction of the MAAG effort was already in effect and that it was fully coordinated and gave him a single senior advisor for important functions plus administrative support and supply for all widely dispersed field locations. The existing system was known by all and working well. A reorganization such as took place in the RVNAF after the coup could be counter-productive.

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Furthermore, the JCS approved Model Plan called for the MAAG to absorb MACV functions at the end of the insurgency. In the next two years, it was proposed to phase down MACV and build up the MAAG. Therefore, a change involving the elimination of MAAG-V would be "180 degrees out of line" with proposed plans. 175.

This position was backed by CINCPAC who told the JCS on 18 February that "we will be unduly rocking the boat to no particular purpose since COMUSMACV already clearly exercises operational control over MAAG and the advisers." The existing arrangement allowed MACV and his staff to concentrate on the COIN effort and freed them from laboring on MAP administrative and logistical details as well as other "nuts and bolts" which the law allows MAAG's to perform. 176.

These efforts to hold off a reorganization were not successful and on 3 March the plan for "Reorganization of the Command Elements, MACV" was prepared by the J-1 staff at MACV. The plan stated as background that MACV was organized in February 1962 and in addition to its assigned mission, had absorbed many functions formerly performed by the MAAG. At the same time, MAAG was reorganized in a configuration adopted to its reduced responsibilities. As a result, some duplication of effort and abnormal command channels and relationships were created. 177.

The MACV plan included a statement that it was based on the concept that MACV was more in the nature of a Specified Army Command rather than a Subordinate Joint Command. Some 65% of US military forces in VN were Army and 95% of RVNAF forces were Army. As the Army Component Commander, COMUSMACV, would exercise direct operational control through appropriate elements of his staff over all Army advisory detachments. The Chief

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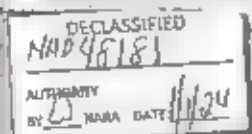
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of the Navy Advisory Group would exercise direct operational control over the Navy advisory detachments but under the operational control of MACV. The Commander, 2d Air Division, under the operational control of MACV would control and support the AF advisory detachments. 178.

Improved responsiveness to command would be obtained, according to the plan, because the command channels would be more clearly defined and direct than in the current MACV/MAAG headquarters. This would be due to the elimination of the Chief, MAAG as an intervening commander in the Army training advisory effort and the entire Navy advisory effort. The amalgamation of the Air Force section of MAAG with the 2d Air Division would place all AF advisory, operational, administrative and logistical support activities under a single command responsive to MACV. The elimination of the Army Section, MAAG, would place all Army administrative and logistic support activities under a single command, MACV. Duplication would be eliminated in that all logistics and administrative support for Army personnel would be concentrated in Army Support Command and that of the USAF in 2d AD. 179.

MACV's plan also said that although reorganization of MACV/MAAG under the proposed concept was feasible, it would, for a few months, involve large numbers of dislocations and reduced effectiveness over that currently obtained from the MACV/MAAG organization. It estimated that it could take three months to a year to implement the plan fully. However, it added that if the assumption for the phase out of MACV reflected in the Model Plan were sound, the reorganization should not be effected. 180.

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In commenting on the MACV proposal, the 2d AD commander, General Moore, said there was no doubt that a consolidation of MAGAF and 2d AD would result in increased efficiency and effectiveness provided several problem areas such as Comptroller funding and reallocation of support resources could be overcome. However, he added, consideration should be given to the possible adverse effect which a major reorganization would have on the already unstable government and military forces of Vietnam. He felt that a streamlining of the present advisory and assistance efforts carried out within the framework of the existing US military advisory commands would be the most desirable course of action. This could be done without further aggravating the instability existing in Vietnam. However, if a full amalgamation of the MAAG/MACV staffs was necessary, then he strongly recommended that the US advisory and assistance efforts in RVN be organized as a sub-unified command with Army, Navy, and Air Force components in order to obtain the outlined objectives. 181.

In preparation for a CINCPAC conference on the reorganization proposal planned for 16 March, the PACAF position on the subject was made known to subordinate commands. PACAF felt that the proposed reorganization represented a large step toward establishing a separate unified or specified command reporting directly to the JCS and it expected strong support for this from the Army in Washington. If there were to be a reorganization, PACAF felt that MACV should be changed to a true sub-unified command with an Army Component Command commanded by someone other than COMUSMACV, who currently held the job. PACAF wanted to increase Air Force representation at all levels of command

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in the MACV structure. It also wanted to get all testing completely out of Vietnam. 182.

In reply to CINCPAC on the proposed reorganization, PACAF noted that the change should be made not only to achieve economies but to bring to bear greater competence for defeating the VC. The creation of a Specified Army Command, it added, would be a serious mistake since what was needed was more, not less participation by other services. It also noted that the change would bring a further increase in the MACV span of control which was inconsistent with the planned phase down of MACV called for in the model plan. The experience with two recent coups, it said, and the deteriorating military situation resulting from them, indicated that changes in the US organization should be by evolutionary process. Instead of a broad change in the US organizational arrangement in Vietnam, PACAF suggested the structure be revised to reflect to some degree the staff structure of both PACOM and PACAF, for example, the double deputy arrangement. It suggested a true Army Component Command and the retention of MAAG as a separate entity under COMUSMACV control. In regards to the Air Force, it suggested that AF combat advisers be placed under 2d AD control but only after studies on a possible overall MAAG reduction. 183.

By the end of March, no decision had come out of the JCS on the proposal. MACV queried this on 31 March, asking CINCPAC for an early decision so it could get moving on proposed changes. It cited an air of uncertainty which was hanging over many people and agencies being affected by the plan. 184.

Approval for the plan came from the JCS on 10 April. Immediate

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implementation was directed but the JCS noted that the present organization of MACV as a subordinate unified command in RVN should be retained. However, it added, in the service manning of the headquarters, "COMUSMACV may adjust the manning proportion so as to reflect the particular interests and degree of involvement of the services." The JCS noted MACV's statement that the change could be made with a savings of personnel and with a minimum disruption. It ordered that prior to any announcement, the modus operandi of the plan be explained in detail to Ambassador Lodge and Premier Khanh. 185.

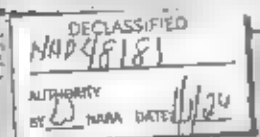
On the effective date 15 May, the MAGAF section of MAAG was established as the Air Force Advisory Group assigned to MACV and further assigned by MACV to the Air Force Component Commander, General Moore, for command and operational control. The AFCC became the senior adviser to the VNAF and was responsible for the Air Advisory Group and the Air Base Advisory teams. The Chief of MAGAF was made the AFCC's Deputy for the Military Assistance Program. MACV had funding and logistical support responsibility for the AFAG and the Air Base Advisory teams. \* Under the new arrangement, the AFAG operated as a self contained subordinate unit of 2d AD just as the 23rd Air Base Group, for example. It reported through the 2d AD to MACV. 186.

This was quite a departure from the original plan prepared by the 2d AD on 20 March 1964 where it was programmed for the MAGAF group to be

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\* Air Base Advisory Elements of the MAGAF were located at Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa, Nha Trang, Da Nang, Pleiku, Ban Me Thout, and Can Tho. There were 116 people assigned this role in March 1964. Total strength of the MAGAF in Tan Son Nhut in March was 142.

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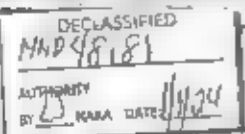
integrated into the 2d AD headquarters staff. This plan would have saved three spaces and increased the headquarters size from 102 people to 246 people. <sup>187.</sup>

On 23 July 1964, the Air Force Advisory Group moved to its new location at Tan Son Nhut in buildings occupied by Headquarters, 2d Air Division. Commander of the group was Brigadier General Robert R. Rowland.

Earlier, on 15 May, MACV had wired the Chief of Staff, USAF, asking that General Rowland be retained in Vietnam until December because he was needed there. The increase of the VNAF to 100 aircraft and possible more and the program for training enough pilots for a two to one cockpit ratio, plus spare parts problems and technical training made his presence of "inestimable importance to the RVN war effort." <sup>188.</sup>

Lt. General William C. Westmoreland, who was scheduled to take over command of USMACV from General Harkins in June, gave his ideas to the JCS on the appointment of a USAF general as Deputy Commander USMACV. On considering the possible expansion of the conflict and the presence of a contingency command back-up, he decided he would want a deputy around 1 August. Since the deputy would be assigned duties involving "matters of insurgency, basic ground combat, frequent negotiations with ARVN generals and supervision of our field advisers," he recommended that the deputy be an Army general. He felt that if another senior Air Force officer were to be assigned, he would be more effective as Deputy Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Thailand. <sup>189.</sup>

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Expansion of 2d AD Base Structure

To handle the additional aircraft assigned to Vietnam in 1964 and to prepare for possible contingency actions in connection with the deepening crisis in Laos, considerable work was being carried out on 2d AD installations, particularly New Can Tho in the delta and Da Nang near the North Vietnam boarder. Work on bases in Thailand is covered in a later section of this history.

Development of New Can Tho

An entirely new base at New Can Tho in the Mekong Delta area to support increased air operations in the area and the new A-1E's and A-1H's was placed under construction in March 1964. The base would take over all VNAF/USAF operations from Soc Trang. Soc Trang was considered unsuitable for 24 hour a day, all weather operations by fighter type aircraft. When New Can Tho takes over as the fighter base, probably in March 1965, Soc Trang would continue as a US Army 121st Aviation Co. base for the unit's 25 UH-1B's and three O-1F aircraft. Transient transport aircraft would also continue to use Soc Trang. 190.

New Can Tho was being built under the Military Assistance Program and would have a 6000 foot runway with 500 foot overruns and aircraft barriers. The construction included everything a base needs to operate such as airfield lighting, parking aprons, taxiways, operations and maintenance facilities. With parking space for 65 aircraft, Can Tho would be used as a forward, all weather, operating base for VNAF strike, liaison, helicopter, reconnaissance, and transport aircraft. The field would also support a USAF effort. The planned usage of the base called for 20 A-1H's,

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20 CH-34's, 20 O-1A and U-6A aircraft, three RT-28's and two C-47's. However, if fully developed, the base could take an additional five A-1H's, two RT-28's and three C-47's of the VNAF and still have space for up to 15 USAF A-1E aircraft. This USAF Fighter augmentation would be a significant contribution to the prosecution of the counter-insurgency effort in the highly active IV Corps area. 191.

In later action, CINCPAC increased the funds allotted to New Can Tho, to allow for a primary parking, an operational apron covering 1,000,000 square feet, a full length parallel taxiway and an additional 200,000 square feet of parking apron. This increase was expected to provide a more versatile and flexible facility and expand the scope of construction sufficiently to meet those 2d AD requirements which MAP would support. 192.

After its completion, New Can Tho would be the primary base for fixed wing air operations in the delta area, where the tempo of VC operations was sharply increased in the first half of 1964.

#### Bien Hoa Improvements

The increase of personnel to Bien Hoa which would take place with the arrival of the new A-1E's and A-1H's called for increased personnel accommodations on the base. Plans called for building a cantonment for 460 enlisted men and 52 officers, including billets, mess halls, latrines, supply and administrative facilities and limited recreational facilities. It was expected that \$410,000 would be necessary for this cantonment including electric and water lines to the site but not including the cost of mess equipment and power generation. Since the personnel increase under the A-1H program, mainly US Navy training people, would take place

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around 1 May, quick action was required. To speed up the completion of the permanent cantonment, a contract with the US firm, Raymond-Morrison-Knudsen (RMK) was recommended. This firm was expected to complete the job in sixty days.<sup>193</sup>

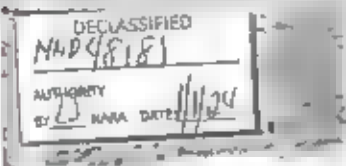
Work on the cantonment area began on 6 April and was completed on 15 May, a period of 39 days. The American contractor, RMK, which finished this job used American equipment and Vietnamese labor with American supervision. Because of its efficiency, it was usually used in important crash projects such as the one at Bien Hoa.<sup>194</sup>

In addition to the cantonment area at Bien Hoa, work was started on 5 June to improve the aircraft apron and was estimated to be completed in August 1964. Other projects at Bien Hoa included a recreational building for airmen completed on 30 June, a swimming pool scheduled for completion in July, and a new Air Force dispensary started on 29 June with an estimated October completion date.<sup>195</sup>

#### Improvement of Da Nang

At Da Nang, the USAF/VNAF base closest to North Vietnam, a general overall reconstruction of the air base was under way in 1964. This would allow for an increased number of aircraft, including jets, to use the station. In June, work was finished on the extension of the 7200 foot runway to 10,000 feet with over-run on each end including arresting barriers. Other construction at Da Nang completed prior to 30 June included an ammo storage area, airfield lighting, perimeter road and fencing, new parking apron, new taxiways, a POL pipeline, and a fuel fill stand. Also completed in June or expected for completion in July, were a fuel storage area a new hangar with maintenance shops, a base

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operations facility, a parachute and dinghy shop and a freight and passenger terminal. Work also was finished on modification of the old hangar area and rehabilitation of the base roads. 196.

Expected for completion by September were a new water line, pumps and storage tanks, a new helicopter and cantonment area, a new taxiway to the heliport, a new helicopter apron, and security fencing for the flight line area. All these projects were being carried out under the Military Assistance Program. 197.

Air Force construction at Da Nang covered several other improvements to this highly important base. A maintenance facility for US aircraft which was begun in April 1963 was completed in April 1964. This, plus several other base improvement projects, when completed, would make Da Nang one of the finest bases in Vietnam and fit it for a role which would include operations outside the borders of RVN.

#### Development of Tan Son Nhut

MAF construction on Tan Son Nhut, the Air Forces main base in Vietnam, included two over-runs on the 10,000 foot runway including arresting barriers, scheduled for completion by November 1964. An air freight and passenger terminal under construction was expected to be ready in July. USAF construction at Tan Son Nhut included the construction of a new Headquarters, 2d AD building begun in 1963 and scheduled for occupancy in July 1964. A photo lab facility was completed in May 1964 after an American contractor was called into take over the job from a Vietnamese contractor. In June, an electrical distribution system and power plant and a new water well was completed. 198.

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Scheduled for completion later in the year were a TACAN-GCA facility begun in February 1964, and four new airman's barracks begun in 1963.

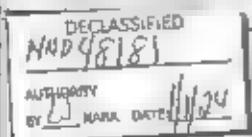
#### Pleiku

At Pleiku, many facilities were approved under the MAP construction program. These included a freight terminal facility, maintenance shops, aircraft hangars, a control tower, wash rack, base supply warehouse, supply open storage area, and civil engineer shops. 199.

This relatively large improvement program for USAF/VNAF installations in Vietnam fit into a wider program which anticipated a greater role for air in the months ahead. More aircraft, better facilities, and an increased scope of USAF involvement was changing the shape of the USAF structure in Southeast Asia. Apart from operational advantages afforded by the improved support structure, there were advantages from the morale standpoint also. Life for the USAF officer and airman was improving as the rather primitive facilities which existed in 1962 and 1963 became increasingly more comfortable and livable.

#### Development of Non-Combat Air Resources in RVN

In addition to its Faragate role involving the A-1E's of the 1st Air Commando Squadron, the 2d Air Division was responsible for a variety of non-combat air activities in support of the war in Vietnam. Its transport capabilities was being taxed to the fullest with the 315th TCG finding it necessary to overfly its scheduled time every month. There was in the middle of 1964 still no professional USAF rescue force in Vietnam although the need for it was becoming more and more apparent as the number of fatalities from air crashes rose to 143 on 1 July 1964. In the

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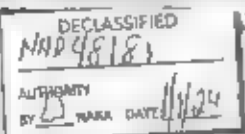
area of reconnaissance, the workload was steadily increasing, particularly after May when the 2d AD took on the major task of providing aerial reconnaissance over Laos.

#### Organization for Air Transport in Vietnam

In the Republic of Vietnam, where geography, economic development, and the intelligence situation dictated a maximum use of air, the USAF's three C-123 squadrons of the 315th Troop Carrier Group were taking on an ever increasing load. Although the US Army and the VNAF were also involved in air transport operations, the major part of the air logistics load was placed upon the C-123's, two squadrons of which were based at Tan Son Nhut and one at Da Nang. The tonnage carried by the 315th more than doubled in 1964. The average tonnage per month in the first three months of 1963 was 4087 compared to 8754 tons in the first three months of 1964. Sorties increased from a monthly average of 1643 in the first five months of 1963 to 2877 per month in 1964's first five months. The outlook was for an even greater load in the latter half of 1964 as a result of an increase in advisor strength, Laos and Thailand support, and the increased USAF/VNAF strength in A-1E's and A-1H's.<sup>200</sup>

The airlift operation carried out in Vietnam by the C-123's was similar to other historical airlift operations in some respects but in others it differed. Airlift in many cases was the only way the war could be kept going in some areas. It was frightful to consider what the situation would be without this C-123 support effort. Special forces camps in I Corps near the North Vietnam border, for example, were completely dependent upon airlift for supplies and movement of personnel.

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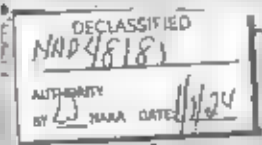
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and without aerial resupply, their chances of being overrun by the VC were great. The situation in Vietnam, though, differed from other lifts in that units needing support were widely dispersed and their needs were sporadic depending often upon the rapidly changing local tactical situation.

In Vietnam there were 176 airfields, of which about 12 had control tower facilities. The 315th operated into about 95 of these and into some 66 different drop zones, most of which were completely uncontrolled as far as air traffic was concerned. Getting in and out of these places, often under enemy fire, called for a high degree of professional competence, judgment, and initiative. There was often no one or nothing pilots could call upon for decision making beyond their own immediate knowledge of the day-to-day operations and the mission briefing information they received. The pilots had to judge weather, runway conditions, and have an intimate knowledge of the operation going on in a particular area to know if the airfield were suitable and secure enough for them to complete their mission. 201.

The primary control of the airlift operation rested with the Transport Movement Control of the 315th which was located in the Air Operations Center. Through the TMC was exercised complete control of the airlift resources throughout the country, permitting application of resources on the basis of priority. Requirements were levied on the airlift system by the Combined Movement Allocations Board, established by COMUSMACV in conjunction with the Joint General Staff of the RVNAF. RVNAF and US forces determined on a monthly basis their estimated needs for air. This was forwarded through the operating levels to MACV and the JGS where a determination

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was made on allocations. This allocation was forwarded to the 315th on a monthly basis and treated as a low priority need, although one-third of the groups monthly activities went into these routine requests. The rest went to on-call logistic operations to support field forces. These were responded to on 24 hour notice. Top priority was given to emergency tactical or pre-planned tactical operations. On these, 24 to 48 hours notice was received and resources were allocated to this type mission prior to application to other logistic missions. Cases of emergency, however, where air evacuation, search and rescue, or direct support of tactical operations, took priority over everything and on these, aircraft were launched on 15 minute notice. For this, three aircraft were maintained on alert at all times at Tan Son Nhut and one aircraft was on alert at Da Nang. The group was also ready to play its part in support of contingency plans, including SEATO contingency plans. <sup>202.</sup>

To satisfy airlift requirements in Southeast Asia, the 315th's commander could call upon the 49 C-123's of his three squadrons, at Tan Son Nhut and Da Nang, the C-47's of the 1st Air Commando Squadron at Bien Hoa, two CV-2B's which the US Army put into the system, two Bristol's belonging to the Royal New Zealand Air Force, and such administrative aircraft and out of country aircraft which were periodically controlled for the movement of in-country cargo. These total resources made up the Southeast Asia Airlift System. In 1963, this system move approximately 78,000 tons of equipment and personnel, which included 181,000 troops. <sup>203.</sup>

Colonel Thomas B. Kennedy, the 315th TCG commander up to June 1964, likened his operation to other historic airlift operations in another respect. The operation was carried into insecure areas where planes landings

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or making cargo drops were exposed to ground fire. In Korea, less than 1% of the activity was of a tactical nature, while in Vietnam, 30% of the total operation was devoted to tactical activity. As 1963 wore on, the VC anti-aircraft capability was slowly forcing the C-123's higher and higher. In May 1963, the minimum safe altitude was considered 1500 feet. After the C-123's received 70 hits by ground fire in 1963 and the average for 1964 was ten a month, the minimum safe altitude was considered at 2500 feet. More C-123's were getting hit in 1964 by ground fire than were any other type of fixed wing aircraft. 204.

The role of the C-123 in Vietnam extended beyond the mere carriage of cargo and passengers. By flying into remote mountain strips of the north, where the contact of the inhabitants with the outside world was limited, the C-123's were often their only contact with the rest of the country. As Colonel David T. Fleming, the 315th's commander in June 1964, put it; "We're more than a supply line; We're a lifeline to all of the forces in Southeast Asia and to the US and Vietnamese people on our bases here." 205. The commander at Da Nang, Col. Benjamin Preston, also described the role of the C-123 in these words: 206.

...I came to realize how much these little people looked forward to the stops by our C-123 aircraft. Our airlift system has revolutionized the way of life of many of these people; particularly the out-post people who depended upon us for resupply. The daily shuttle run between Da Nang and Tan Son Nhut affectionately called the TWA (Teeny Weeny Airlines) or the "Shotgun Stage" has become famous to Vietnamese and US alike as the only way most of them can travel north or south. Sometimes it breaks down enroute at Nha Trang, Qui Nhon, Quang Ngai, or Hue Fue Bai, and it becomes a community project to load, unload, handle block and tackle, etc, and try to get it going again. I guess it comes closer to the old Western Overland Stage than anything else I can think of...

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...I watched our crews at work, and the way they handled themselves in helping people, reassuring children and ancient old peasant couples, laughing and joking, sweating and cursing, but acknowledging the human dignity of the individual all the while made me realize that they were some of Mr. Lodge's best possible ambassadorial representatives....

In likening the 315th's operations to the Western Overland Stage, Colonel Preston didn't mention that those modern "stages" were subjected to the same type of gunfire experienced by the early ground vehicles. Every single C-123 of the squadron based at Da Nang had been hit by enemy bullets. One aircraft sustained 32 bullet holes. The defoliation C-123 which carried out its operations as low as 300 foot altitude, had its patches painted red and looked like a "case of measles." Low level "bundle drops" also subjected C-123 crews to VC gun fire. Miraculously, there were no serious injuries to C-123 crews from enemy bullets as of 30 June 1964. 207.

The C-123 proved ideal for its assigned mission in Vietnam, according to Colonel Fleming, but it was beginning to show signs of wrinkled wings and other indications of metal fatigue. "It was not built for the punishment it takes over here," he said, "where you have to pull up suddenly to avoid ground fire, make short field landings on PSP, and weave around hills and valleys." Nevertheless, the performance of this aircraft flown by many ex-SAC pilots who had never flown straight level below 20,000 feet before, was one of the bright spots in the Air Force record in Vietnam. 208.

Because of the workload placed upon it, another squadron C-123's was requested for Vietnam by the Commander, USMACV in mid 1964. COMUSMACV

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felt that the time for deployment of the fourth squadron existed in July 1964. He noted that the three squadrons had consistently overflown their programmed 60 hours per aircraft per month since 1 January 1964. The average for the first six months of 1964 was 68.4 hours. In April and May, they were 72.6 and 81.5 respectively. The flying hours for January-June 1964 were listed as follows: 209.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Total Flying Hrs</u>	<u>Hrs. Per Acft</u>
January	2901	60.4
February	2975	62.0
March	3279	68.3
April	3485	72.6
May	3913	81.5
June	3155	65.7

In listing additional justification for the dispatch of a fourth squadron of C-123's to Vietnam, COMUSMACV cited the need for a surge capacity in case the road movement of POL was interdicted and the air-lifting of substantial tonnages became necessary. By the recent overflying of programmed hours (60 per month) the surge capacity was lost and this was especially serious due to the diversion of three C-123's to Thailand in support of the Laos situation. The expected additional tonnage required by all these factors was placed in the neighborhood of 2500 tons a month. The prospective introduction of six Royal Australian Air Force CV-2B (Caribou) aircraft would reduce this requirement by about 300 tons a month but any gained capability would be offset by proposed increased IRAN requirements, corrosion and airframe inspection needs, in addition to out of country periodic inspections.



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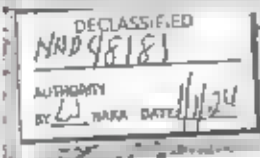
As many as eleven airframes could be out of the country for these inspections. 210.

COMUSMACV asked that the C-123 squadron being held in reserve in the COMUS be assigned PCS to RVN as soon as possible. The full TO/E of a 16 plane squadron should be provided to enhance flexibility and control. This would mean an increase of 347 military personnel and 30 extra indigenous personnel. It was recommended that the aircraft be modified for theater use, in other words, with a navigator station, armor plate, and flame suppressor prior to departure from the US. As interim relief, COMUSMACV wanted four C-130 aircraft with a 1.5 air-crew ratio to be assigned to 2d AD on TDY until the C-123's were in place. 211.

With the increasing logistics load being placed upon the air transport capability in Vietnam, serious study was given in 1964 to increasing railroad traffic. This was a major problem due to the frequent harassment of the railroad running from Saigon up the coast of Vietnam to Hue. In 1962, there were 222 railroad harassment incidents and although this dropped slightly to 219 incidents in 1963, there was a marked increase in the number of incidents in late 1963. About 60% of the incidents took place on the 20% of rail which runs through the Binh Dinh, Phu Yen and Binh Thuan provinces. As a result of this harassment, a greater and greater load was being placed on the air transport capability. In 1964, only 4% of US and RVNAF logistics movement was by rail; airlift made up the principal manner of moving the other 96%. 212.

To increase the amount of tonnage carried by rail, CINCPAC advised MACV early in 1964 to increase rail security and plan for greater rail-

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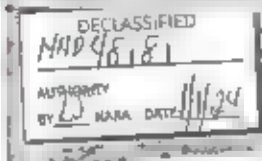
road loads. The savings resulting from the decreased airlift tonnage could then be used to provide for improved railroad security. CINCPAC noted that the air escort of trains in 1963 was highly effective. For each month in which the number of trains receiving air escort increased, there was a corresponding decrease in VC incidents against railroads. When air escort missions decreased, VC incidents rose abruptly.<sup>213</sup>

MACV was directed to study the total in-country logistics problem to determine where and under what circumstances surface transport could replace airlift considering the degrees of risk, priorities, and types of cargo. This was to be for the immediate and long term future. For improved railroad security, the training of train walkers in techniques of mine detection and the use of portable detection devices was to be considered. Also, CINCPAC directed that air escort of trains be increased to the maximum extent feasible and that subsequent data be prepared on the effectiveness of air escort.<sup>214</sup>

There seemed little chance, however, that the role of air transport would be diminished in the months ahead. The VC had become much more aggressive in 1964 and the number of rail and road attacks was on the increase. In effect, the Republic of Vietnam in mid-1964 was a patchwork of friendly and unfriendly areas all interspersed and air was the primary means of holding the friendly areas together.

The number of sorties flown by the C-123's more than doubled between January 1963 and June 1964. The tonnage carried in June 1964 was more than tripled. The chart below illustrates this dramatic increase in the C-123 role between January 1963 and June 1964:<sup>215</sup>

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<u>Month</u>	<u>Sorties Flown</u>	<u>Total Tonnage Carried, Pass/Cargo</u>
January 1963	1328	2027.5
February 1963	1285	2224.7
March 1963	1635	2714.0
April 1963	1539	2106.1
May 1963	2157	3249.5
June 1963	1796	2678.2
July 1963	2216	4703.0
August 1963	2088	4638.1
September 1963	2315	4850.8
October 1963	2259	4898.7
November 1963	2512	5406.2
December 1963	2689	6344.7
January 1964	2478	5664.0
February 1964	2333	5393.0
March 1964	2868	6488.0
April 1964	3133	7051.0
May 1964	2852	5340.0
June 1964	2882	6623.0

In addition to the airlift resources of the 315th TAC, the US Army had 16 CV-58 (Caribou) aircraft in the theater, only two of which were committed to the 315th's Southeast Asia Airlift System. In March four were assigned to the 145th Aviation Battalion in III Corps; three were in the I Corps Aviation Detachment; three were in the 52nd Aviation Battalion in II Corps three were in the Delta Aviation Battalion of IV Corps, and one was assigned to JUSMAG Thailand, Bangkok. 216.

However, in July, the arrangement was to change when the two Caribous were scheduled for release from the Southeast Asia Airlift System. The new allocation of Caribous on 30 July 1964 was as follows: Three to I Corps, three to IV Corps, three to II Corps, four to III Corps, one to JUSMAGTHAI, and one to general support. Aircraft were directed to be allocated by tail number whenever possible. However, MACV desired that an equitable distribution of flyable aircraft be maintained. Priorities for the first nine flyable aircraft were one to JUSMAGTHAI and two to each corps senior advisor. Priorities for the remaining aircraft were as

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follows: 217

10th Aircraft	- III Corps
11th Aircraft	- IV Corps
12th Aircraft	- II Corps
13th Aircraft	- I Corps
14th Aircraft	- III Corps
15th Aircraft	- General Support
16th Aircraft	- 61st Aviation Company

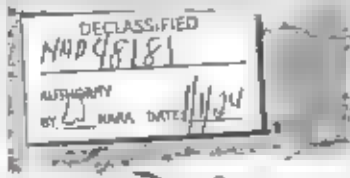
#### Providing a Professional USAF Rescue Capability in Vietnam

As of 1 July 1964, there was still no US Air Force sea-air rescue unit based in Vietnam although action to get such a unit began back in early 1963. As of 1 July 1964, there were 143 fatalities as the result of crashes of US aircraft in Vietnam. It was the considered opinion of the Chief of Detachment 3, Pacific Air Rescue Center, Major Alan W. Saunders, that many of these lives could have been saved if a professional USAF rescue organization had been located in RVN. 218.

The rescue organization in mid-1964, was centered on the USAF's Detachment 3, Pacific Air Rescue Center, consisting of five controllers and a clerk. Actual rescue operations were carried out by helicopters of the US Army, US Marines, and the VNAF and often by crews not professionally trained in rescue techniques. There were several instances where deficiencies in this rescue system were revealed. 219.

One occurred in late 1963 when an Army aircraft went down in II Corps area on the side of a 6000 foot mountain in heavy rainforest. The US Marines responded to this with one of their H-34 helicopters. An attempted pick-up failed because the helicopter did not have sufficient rescue

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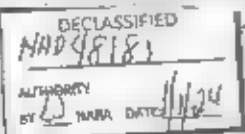
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cable to reach the ground due to the 200 feet height of the trees. In attempting the pick-up, the helicopter lost its lift and went down in the jungle. The pilot and an other crew member were critically injured. There was no way of getting them out in quick order because there were no para-rescue people in Vietnam. Nowhere in the theater was there a helicopter with sufficient cable on a winch to lower a man into the jungle to get them. There were no clearings anywhere which would allow a chopper to land. As a result, rescue had to be made by foot and it took two days to get to the area. When the foot soldiers arrived, both crew members were dead. <sup>220.</sup>

Another case involved an Army helicopter which crashed in the ocean just off the coast above Nha Trang. The four crew members aboard got out and started swimming but they faced an outgoing tide and the going was rough. It was night and Army helicopters were sent in to do the rescue work. The pilots were not night qualified or instrument qualified. The pilot of the first rescue helicopter lost his horizon and flew into the water. As a result, the other helicopters on the rescue mission were withdrawn. There was a flareship in the area and the pilot of the flareship said later he could see the beaches just as bright as day. The co-pilot of the downed helicopter made it to shore, although he had a broken arm and injured back. The other three crew members drowned. <sup>221.</sup>

Another instance occurred at the mouth of the Mekong River south of Saigon. A helicopter with six people aboard went down. Two of the six went down with the helicopter, probably trapped inside. Four got out and were swimming in the water. Two of the four were rescued, one of them, the co-pilot, said the pilot drowned because of rotor wash from the

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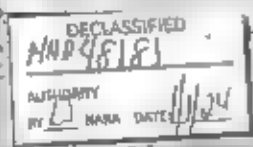
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rescuing helicopter because the rescue pilot did not know how to approach him. Instead of approaching him from straight overhead which tends to smooth out the area around the individual, they approached at low level creating a wave in front of the chopper. One crew member of the rescuing Army HU-1B had one of the victims by the hands when an H-21 crew called on the radio and said "Clear the area; we're going to drop Mac West vests." The crew member holding the victim's hands let go and he went under water. His body washed up on the beach the next day. <sup>222.</sup>

Although several letters had passed back and forth on the need for an AF rescue unit in Vietnam, no concrete steps were taken until September 1963 when Major Saunders, with the approval of the 2d Air Division, prepared a comprehensive study on the subject citing incidents and statistics. This left 2d AD headquarters in September through Air Force channels to avoid any Army-Air Force conflict. This study made its way to CINCPAC and back to MACV, twice for MACV concurrence, and in late January, still had not been acted upon. <sup>223.</sup>

The 2d Air Division had asked for four units to be placed in such a way as to give complete coverage of Vietnam. This was done because of a recognition of the need for quick response. "If you don't react in a hurry," said Major Saunders, "The VC will get to the man before you do." Four units, spread out over the length of Vietnam, could get this quick response. Because of the 200-500 foot high densely packed foliage encountered in the northern section, the 2d AD asked that a cable at least 200 feet long be fitted to the helicopters. The 2d AD recommended that the helicopter selected for the job have self-sealing fuel



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tanks, armor plating around the crew seats, engines and fuel lines, and swing gun mounts on the doors in the Army Huey style. It knew the helicopters were not to be weapons platforms, but it recognized that the VC would quickly learn that the helicopters were unarmed and would more openly resist them. And it wanted the helicopters brought in as soon as possible because of the urgent need for them. <sup>224.</sup>

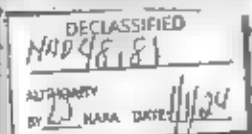
While 2d AD's study was being bounced back and forth between MACV and CINCPAC over a three month period PACAF was taking action to get rescue units in Vietnam. It planned on three units rather than four and the use of the H-3C. Six aircraft would be deployed. Since the H-3C would not be immediately available, the HH-43B was considered acceptable as an interim vehicle. It would be modified for RVN operations to include a 250 foot hoisting cable, self-sealing tanks, limited armor plating, and if feasible, auxiliary fuel tanks for range extension. <sup>225.</sup>

PACAF had been notified on 28 March of USAF approval of the transfer of three detachments to RVN with a target planning date of June 1964 for deployment. Preliminary action was being taken to modify six HH-43B's on a priority basis. <sup>226.</sup>

On 30 April, PACAF asked 13th AF to seek information concerning MACV's intentions regarding the introduction of this force into RVN. It noted that MACV had still not replied to CINCPAC's request from comments which was sent on 7 April. Funds and resources needed to constitute the recovery detachments had already been earmarked by PACAF. <sup>227.</sup>

In April, PACAF wired CINCPAC asking approval to introduce the Air Rescue Service into Vietnam. It said the introduction of the modified HH-43B would provide a capability not possessed by any aircraft in RVN.

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The concept of operations would require these aircraft to use the entire RVN base structure in conducting random rescue recovery missions. Priority action to get the required aircraft modification program under way had been initiated and the first three aircraft of this unit could be ready for deployment to RVN in June 1964. PACAF noted that there were no professional air rescue service forces available in RVN for the prosecution of SAR missions. While assistance had been rendered by all forces possessing secondary SAR capabilities, the increased incidents and lost aircraft and aircrews validated the requirement "for an air rescue service that will be responsible on a full time basis." In addition to requesting approval for introduction of the detachments, PACAF asked that the 2d AD RVN military ceiling be adjusted by 66 additional personnel spaces. 228.

In May, CINCPAC approved the introduction of the USAF rescue capability into RVN. Action was being taken to establish three detachments in Vietnam. Detachment 3, Pacific Air Rescue Center, was already in being at Tan Son Nhut, being the controlling agency. Detachment 4, PARC, would be equipped with three HH-43B's and located at Bien Hoa. Detachment 5, PARC, would also have three HH-43B's and placed at Soc Trang. Because of the 120 days estimated as the time required by factories to make the necessary modifications, and since the contracts could not be let until approval was received to bring the helicopters into RVN, it was expected that the USAF capability would not be available till several months after July 1964. 229.

One other element which made the introduction of the professional force very important was the high density traffic in the Saigon area and

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the tremendous number of MATS and contract carried passengers being airlifted into and out of Vietnam. Although the Republic of Vietnam was responsible for civil sea-air rescue operations, they had very little capability to do the job, relying in the main on light aviation. In the unfortunate circumstance of a MATS passenger transport going down in dense jungle growth which can completely swallow up an aircraft leaving no trace on the treetop level, the lack of a professional rescue team could be disastrous, according to Major Saunders. 230.

#### Development of Air Reconnaissance in SEA

The recon force available to the 2d AD commander in June 1964 consisted of six RF-101's, two RB-57's and one RB-26L aircraft. Assigned to Detachment 1, 33rd Tactical Group, and under the operational command of General Moore, the recon force accomplished day photography consisting of area covers, strips and pinpoints, and night photography limited to pinpoints and strips not exceeding 8 nautical miles in length. The RB-26L and RB-57's were also equipped with the Reconofax VI infrared system. 231.

The original reconnaissance task force arrived at Don Muang, Thailand, on 6 November 1961, consisting of four RF-101 aircraft and a photo processing cell. The unit was assigned to 2d AD. The first mission was flown on 8 November and by December of 1962, 1016 missions totalling 3112 flying hours were flown. The PPC in this period processed 597,352 feet of film and made 426,382 prints. 232.

In June 1962, operational control of the RTF was transferred to the Air Force Component Command Joint Task Force 116 at Don Muang. For the next

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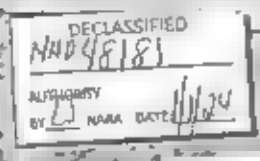
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three months the major effort was over Laos. In September, at the request of the 2d AD, emphasis was again shifted to Vietnam. The RTF was placed back under operational control of 2d AD on 8 December 1962 and on 15 December, it deployed to Tan Son Nhut. Since that time, all recon operations of the RTF were conducted from Tan Son Nhut with short deployments to Thailand to accomplish outstanding Thai targets. <sup>233.</sup>

In early April 1963, two additional RF-101's were deployed to Tan Son Nhut <sup>234.</sup> and on 15 April, two RB-57E's the first in Vietnam, were ordered to deploy to RVN to supplement the force. These aircraft were since transferred to 13th AF with maintenance support being provided by the 33rd CAMRON at Tan Son Nhut.

The addition of the RB-57E to the recon task force was welcome indeed to 2d AD. This type of aircraft was expected to considerably increase specialized aerial reconnaissance capability in Vietnam. Specifically, it would provide an improved and continuous infrared capability in country. In the past, this coverage was intermittent because of out of country maintenance needs. The RB-57E would also provide a better and more reliable night aerial recon capability to support round-the-clock recon operations. It would add to the overall day aerial photo recon capability by providing a longer range aerial recon platform with the latest panoramic camera equipment. Finally, it would enhance the total recon effort in support of the National Campaign Plan which was expected to increase recon needs. Since the RB-57E was a jet bomber configuration and subject to political criticism, the US Ambassador was asked to concur in its introduction into the theater. This he did since the aircraft mission and capability was strictly reconnaissance and would have no offensive strike capability. <sup>235.</sup>

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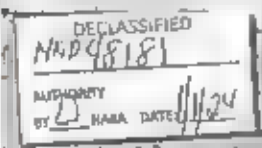
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On 8 July 1963, Detachment 1, 33rd Tactical Group, was activated and all recon forces were placed under it with command exercised by the 2d AD through the Air Operations Center. Two RB-26L and two RB-26C aircraft assigned to the 1st Air Commando Squadron at Bien Hoa were transferred to Detachment 1. One RB-26L was lost in December 1963. <sup>236</sup>

The force was reduced early in 1964, as a result of the B-26 wing failure. Because of a shortage in air strike vehicles at Bien Hoa, the two RB-26C's were loaned to the 1st Air Commando Squadron in February. The aircraft were equipped with Norden bomb sights to determine the feasibility of employing them in low level bombing techniques. This left the detachment with only the one RB-26L which was restricted because of the wing problem. On 24 February 1964, 2d AD asked 13th AF to replace the three RB-26's with RB-57's which it felt would significantly improve the USAF recon capability in SEA. Reaction times would improve, the night photo capability would double and the day capability would also go up. No action was taken on this request as of 30 June 1964. <sup>237</sup>

Despite the loss of the RB-26 capability, in 1964, the number of photo recon sorties flown showed a sharp increase over 1963. In the six month period including December 1963 and May 1964, 1688 photo recon sorties were flown compared with only 1046 in the previous six month period. The number of sorties flown in response to tactical requests for coverage of a target area also showed an increase for the same period. These averaged about 250 a month in the period between December 1963 and May 1964. <sup>238</sup>

Tactical recon support was geared to the immediate tactical intelligence and operational needs of field commanders. Requests for recon support followed the same channels as those for air strikes. They went



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from company to battalion to regiment to division to corps and then to the AOC. When the mission was flown and the film processed by the Photo Recce Cell or the Recce Tech Squadron, the film was flown by courier aircraft to the requesting agency.

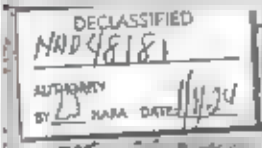
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According to Maj. Gen. Rollin H. Anthis, 2d AD commander up to Dec. '63, the employment of tactical recon aircraft in RVN highlighted many unique problems. One had to immediately discount the traditional WW II, Korean War, or Cuban situation approach, he said. In Cuba, for example, targets were stationary and crews could pre-plan missions against these targets and if weather prevented coverage one day, the target would still be there the following day. Photo interpreters could compare daily photographs of missile sites or port facilities to assess the degree of build-up or tear down or how many missiles were being shipped out. In Vietnam, however, targets sometimes squads of men in diversified dress located in mountain areas under three layers of jungle canopy. Specific problems which limited the air reconnaissance effort were:

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1. Inability to identify the enemy by geographic location, dress, working habits, or physical features which did not differ from the local friendly populace.
2. Requirement for pinpoint navigation over extensive areas void of positive check points and navigational aids for accurate positioning and locating of targets and subsequent photography.
3. Heavy haze and adverse weather conditions.
4. Requirement for visual reconnaissance and photo coverage along irregular, poorly defined borders.
5. Small, fleeting targets difficult to locate and photograph.

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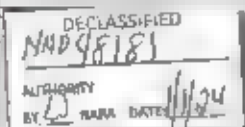
6. Inability to observe enemy activity below the dense forest canopy or in heavy foliage.
7. Lack of conclusively proven techniques and procedures for employing night photography and IR in a SAW environment.

The reconnaissance force of RF-101's, RF-57's, and RF-26's in Southeast Asia, General Anthis said, while well suited for the true tactical reconnaissance role, was not ideally suited for SAW operations. Their requirement for extensive airfield preparation could degrade their suitability in some SAW operations. A strike aircraft with improved capability for SAW operations, should be developed for use in a dual strike-reconnaissance role. Reconnaissance sensors such as low light level TV or image orthicon, could serve the recon role in RVN, where the enemy relied extensively on the cover of darkness for the movement of supplies and for attacks against defended points. Another recon improvement, he said would be development of a modern lightweight air transportable photo processing cell. This should be of such a size and weight that it could be airlifted into minimum prepared fields with aircraft comparable to the C-123 or follow-on transport aircraft. This PPC, one or more recon craft, and a small maintenance team would make up a recon cell which could be deployed by the AOC, ASOC or Sub-ASOC at corps or division level. This would allow for a more immediate response to the requester's needs. <sup>241.</sup>

General Anthis suggested that the USAF TARC be tasked to investigate these areas and develop and test new methods and techniques of employing tactical reconnaissance in a SAW environment. <sup>242.</sup>

The basic plan for tactical reconnaissance in the 2d AD area of operations in 1964 covered requirements for recon efforts throughout Southeast Asia. Although primarily conducted to support counterinsurgency actions

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within Vietnam and Thailand, tactical recon operations could also be conducted over other areas as directed by higher authority. Within RVN the lack of any significant local national tactical recon capability indicated that the USAF would carry the load for an indefinite period. The increases in the recon force necessary to do the job would be necessary until the VNAF capability in this area was improved. Aerial recon capabilities in all the friendly SEA countries were practically non-existent. <sup>243.</sup>

The primary aerial recon effort in SEA was vested in Det. 1, 33rd Tactical Group located at Tan Son Nhut. This element consisted of RF-101's, RB-57's and RB-26's. The RB-26's were used for operations in RVN. RF-101's and RB-57's were employed throughout SEA to take advantage of their long range, and high/low day visual and photo capabilities. The RB-57 had a night capability and was equipped with infrared sensors. <sup>244.</sup>

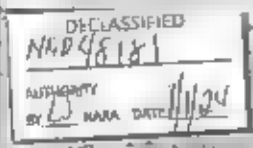
To improve the VNAF capability so it could take over the recon effort, 18 RF-28's and three RC-47's were programmed for delivery in 1964. In addition, 22 Army L-10 aircraft were to be turned over to the VNAF in May 1964. <sup>245.</sup>

#### Air Defense

To provide an all weather air defense capability to South Vietnam the government of RVN in 1962 approved the deployment of US forces with this capability to RVN. The plan covering this was called "Candy Machine". This involved USAF and US Navy forces, the USAF providing three F/RF-102's and the US Navy three EA-1F's. The F-102's came from 5th AF resources and the Navy aircraft from the Seventh Fleet.

USAF and USN forces were to have the capability to deploy to RVN within 12 and 48 hours respectively, after receipt of deployment direct-

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ives. Deployment was for one to two week periods to test reaction times and train Ground Control Intercept Directors as well as air crews. Deployments were carried out periodically. Operational control of the deployed fighters was exercised by the 2d AD commander through the AOC at Tan Son Nhut. Deployed forces were normally sent to Tan Son Nhut. <sup>246.</sup>

This plan continued to be exercised in 1964 as the method by which air defense could be provided to US forces and RVNAF in the Republic of Vietnam. In any emergency situation, it would result in the quick dispatch of all weather fighters to RVN to insure against enemy air activity against the country.

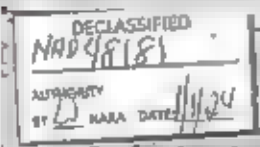
#### Air Force Build-up in Thailand

In the first half of 1964, as the 2d Air Division began a major build-up of its organization in Thailand in response to a deterioration in the political-military situation in Laos. At Takhli, where a small TAC detachment of six F-100's was based, action was considered to increase the detachment to a full squadron of 18 aircraft. At Udorn, near the border of Laos, a SAW detachment of the 1st Air Commando Squadron with T-28's and C-47's was deployed in March to support the Royal Laotian Air Force. The 2d AD base at Ubon, where the 332d Air Base Squadron was located, also took on an increased role in support of the Laotian crisis. Most important, perhaps, in terms of direct USAF participation in support of the deteriorating military situation in Laos, was USAF reconnaissance flights over Laos and the employment of F-100's in attacks on Pathet Lao positions during June 1964.

#### Political Background to Laotian Crisis

Since April 1963 when the Pathet Lao reopened intermittent hostilities

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against the neutralist and conservative forces, and the Pathet Lao ministers withdrew from active participation in the tripartite cabinet, Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma had persistently tried to get a cease-fire and restore a functioning coalition government. In early April 1964, Souvanna visited Hanoi and Peking to assess the attitude of these regimes and get their help in persuading the Pathet Lao to cooperate with his government. He returned to Vientiane with a feeling of encouragement as a result of assurances given him. He believed the Chinese had agreed that Laos was a separate problem from South Vietnam and Cambodia and that this meant North Vietnam would stop its interference in Laos, that is, keeping its troops there, supporting the Pathet Lao militarily, and infiltrating Viet Cong through Southern Laos into South Vietnam.<sup>247.</sup>

In this optimistic mood, Souvanna on April 17-18 met in a "summit" meeting on the Plain of Jars with General Phoumi, the Conservative leader, and Prince Souphanouvong, the Pathet Lao leader. The talks broke down on the second day because the Pathet Lao delivered an ultimatum to Phoumi to accept the PL position on security arrangements for a reunited Government of National Union (GNU). Souvanna considered that Phoumi took a reasonable position but that the PL were not negotiating. Souvanna broke off the talks and on 18 April announced to the press that since an agreement between the Right and Left was not possible, he would submit his resignation to the King on 20 April.<sup>248.</sup>

In the early morning of 19 April, extremist elements of the conservative forces in Vientiane, calling themselves the Revolutionary Committee, took over the city and arrested the Prime Minister and other neutralists. The new group wanted the establishment of a new government without PL participation. An important motivating factor for the action was the

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inability of the International Control Commission (ICC) to do anything  
 about constant communist nibblings and flagrant cease fire violations. 249.

The US Government reacted immediately to the coup by issuing a statement opposing the seizure of power by the group and reaffirming support of the 1962 Geneva agreement and the Government of National Union under Souvanna Phouma. The Hanoi, Peiping, and Pathet Lao regimes charged that the coup was master-minded by the US as part of an overall plot for Southeast Asia and that the US wished to destroy the GNU and the Geneva agreements. 250.

The US position was clearly stated on this crisis. It wanted the GNU government in power and it wanted to preserve the Geneva agreements. It felt that this was the best chance of avoiding a resumption of full-scale civil war with the concomitant danger of a great power confrontation in Laos. It also believed that this course of action might permit eventual achievement of reconciliation among warring Laos factions with a return of peace and stability to the strife-torn kingdom. The US did not want a return to the situation which existed prior to the Geneva conference when the Pathet Lao, heavily supported by North Vietnam forces, seemed on the point of overrunning all of Laos unless the US and its SEATO allies were prepared to stop them by direct military intervention. Recognizing the realities of the Laotian situation, the US believed that the 1962 Geneva settlement provided the best available framework for preserving the peace and independence of Laos. When the situation was restored, it wanted efforts continued to improve the structure and role of the International Control Commission to make it more effective in carrying out its control and supervisory functions. 251.

In the face of US opposition to the coup as well as opposition from Britain, Russia, and Communist China, the generals who led the coup made

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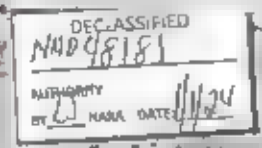
a declaration that they would agree to the restoration of Souvanna's coalition government if it were enlarged to include "qualified personalities". This clearly meant the members of the military junta. Souvanna then cautiously announced that his Cabinet had accepted various points of the demands and therefore "considers that there is a continuity in the exercise of its government's powers. The Pathet Lao immediately denounced the Right Wing demands as an attempt to sabotage the policy of peace and neutrality in Laos.  
 252.

On 16 May, the Pathet Lao renewed their attacks on the neutralists in the strategic Plain of Jars, an area 214 miles long and 14 miles wide. A mixed force of Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese troops launched a heavy attack on the Neutralist positions, giving them control of more than half of the strategic plain. By the 24th of May, an overwhelming communist force overran the Muong Kheung headquarters of Neutralist General Kong Le's armoured regiment and the last Neutralist outpost in the Plain of Jars. On 29 May, 1964, the Pathet Lao announced it was pulling all its personnel from Vientiane, thus finishing off the fiction of a coalition government for Laos. According to the Pathet Lao, Prince Souvanna Phouma was no longer considered as the "Premier of the legitimate National Union Government". The Pathets denounced the US and British proposal for ambassadorial consultations in Vientiane by the 14 nations which signed the Geneva agreements.  
 253.

At the request of the Lao Government, the United States, on 21 May, began flying reconnaissance missions over eastern Laos, when necessary, to obtain information on the communist forces in the area.  
 254.

On 6 June, an F-8 from the US aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk was shot down over the Ban Ban area of central Laos. The next day, USAF F-100's

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attacked Pathet Lao positions in the area. On 9 June Premier Souvanna Phouma was quoted as saying he wanted US reconnaissance flights stopped because there were no communist movements. On 10 June, jet recon flights were discontinued at the request of Souvanna. On 12 June, Souvanna announced that recon flights could be resumed because of important movements of communist and Pathet Lao and Viet Minh forces in Laos. <sup>255.</sup>

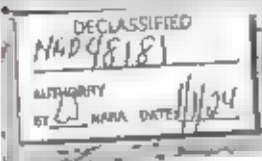
As a result of these critical developments in Laos and their impact upon the situation in Vietnam, the USAF began early in 1964 a build-up of its organization in Thailand which enabled it to play an air support role in the Laos fighting.

Deployment of T-28's to Udorn

In February 1964, the Secretary of State authorized the US Ambassador to Thailand to approach the Royal Thai Government on the possible deployment of four T-28's and pilots and 30 to 40 supporting personnel to Thailand. <sup>\*</sup> This deployment would be a training project to enhance the Thai capability and give impetus to the RTAF participation in the "up-country development program". The unit would also have as its objectives; (1) to provide readily available sources of aircraft augmentation for the Royal Lao/Lao Air Force in the event of serious offensive operations by Pathet Lao/Viet Minh forces. (2) to provide a means of remedying a deficiency in maintenance and maintenance training for T-28's already in Laos. (3) to provide an opportunity for RTAF pilot training in association with Thai and US pilots, and (4) to provide facilities for combat readiness training of the Royal Thai Air Force. <sup>256.</sup>

\* A request for deployment of a USAF S&W detachment had been made by PACAF and forwarded to OSD by CINCPAC on 6 December 1963. Secret Msg, PACAF to CINCPAC PFDOP 5010-64 27 2055Z/Feb 1964, Doc....

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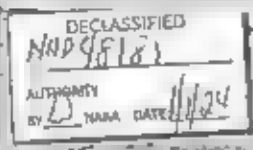
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The selection of the northern Thailand base of Udorn for the T-28 deployment was based on its potential contribution to the Royal Lao Lian Air Force T-28 program. This was a matter of geography but the facility at Udorn would still be useful from the standpoint of aircraft maintenance and pilot training if conditions in Thailand dictated a more southern location. The location of the detachment at Udorn was seen as not having a significant political impact on Laos except as it would bring Laos and Thailand into a further cooperative venture. From the Laos point of view, Ambassador Unger believed that the presence of the team should be neither widely advertised or disguised.<sup>257.</sup>

It was decided to erect the T-28 aircraft at Bien Hoa, because of the existing T-28 capability in Vietnam. Subsequent delivery to Udorn without overflying Cambodia or Laos was well within the range of the aircraft. PACAF requested that aircraft be shipped direct to Bien Hoa and that SHANA provide an erection team. The 2d AD would accomplish test flights and prepare the aircraft for ferry to Udorn. To achieve maximum use of the aircraft during the period of deployment, an arrangement for contractual repair of crash damaged planes or other repair beyond the capability of 2d AD, was recommended by PACAF. It suggested negotiation of a call contract with Air America at Udorn similar to the one held with Air Vietnam at Tan Son Nhut.<sup>258.</sup>

On 5 March, the Chief of Staff, USAF directed TAC to deploy four T-28's and necessary personnel to Udorn for a period of six months on a TDY basis. Pending further instructions, all flights of these aircraft were to be within the borders of Thailand. Forty-one TAC people were scheduled to accompany the aircraft. Concurrently, 13th AF was planning to deploy necessary communications equipment to support the detachment.<sup>259.</sup>



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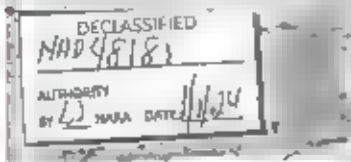
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The four T-28 aircraft arrived in Thailand on 31 March 1964. The public announcement of the arrival said that a small detachment of USAF T-28D trainers had arrived to provide advance flight and ground maintenance training to Royal Thai Air Force pilots and ground crews under the Military Assistance Program.<sup>260</sup>

Prior to the arrival of these first T-28's, Ambassador Unger had recommended that the restraints imposed by the US on the use of aircraft and bombs by the RLAF be relaxed and greater discretionary authority given. He proposed their use for reprisal against aggressive actions and for interdiction of build-ups for attack. The JCS supported Ambassador Unger's proposals and recommended even stronger action. They recommended that: (1) Missions assigned should be offensive as well as defensive, (2) Restrictions on the use of napalm should be removed, (3) First priority on interdiction missions should be inbound convoys, (4) Considerations should be given to use of US and third country forces to provide air support in Laos, (5) US aerial reconnaissance could contribute much in view of the limited capability of the RLAF, and (5) The SAN detachment being deployed to SEA could provide substantial assistance in training and advice to the RLAF.<sup>261</sup>

These views were forwarded to the State Department. On 20 March, the State Department advised Ambassador Unger that a limited number of bomb fuses could be released to the RLAF since the proposed use of bombs could be considered in support of "responsive counterattacks to regain ground lost to the Pathet Lao and as reprisal in response to a Pathet Lao attack". This was the first time the RLAF had been permitted to maintain custody of any bomb fuses.<sup>262</sup>

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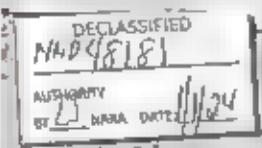
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The question of where to assign the SAW detachment was resolved in March. The Chief of the Joint US Military Assistance Group, Thailand, believed that the unit should be assigned to him because of its training role. However, PACAF took exception to this. Its position was that the SAW detachment's functions were not training functions that fell within the statutory purview of a MAAG or JUSMAG but were operational functional identified with an operational component commander. The mission of the SAW detachment to Thailand was similar to the functions being performed by the Faragate unit in Vietnam with the JUSMAG in Thailand coordinating the training requirements just as the Chief of MAAG in RVN.<sup>263.</sup>

In defending this position, PACAF noted that during the planning stages to introduce the Faragate unit into Vietnam in 1961, the Chief of the MAAG in Vietnam indicated his desire to control the unit. At that time, it was determined by CINCPAC that the MAAG authority did not fall within the purview of that request and MAAG was not granted operational control. Consequently, the 2d AUVON was introduced into RVN for command and control of USAF units in all of Southeast Asia. Because of this precedent, PACAF noted, and because 2d AD had since become a well functioning organization, the SAW deployment to Thailand should be assigned to the 2d AD. This would provide consistent command arrangements, an instantaneous operational capability and it would provide immediate SAW augmentation to the RLAF. Also, in light of current intelligence assessments, PACAF did not believe it appropriate to establish a split command of the tactical air resources in Southeast Asia.<sup>264.</sup>

The "Faragate" experience in Vietnam was also studied in consideration of the possibility of setting-up a similar "Faragate" operation in Laos. When the first Jungle Jim (Faragate) unit was introduced into Viet-

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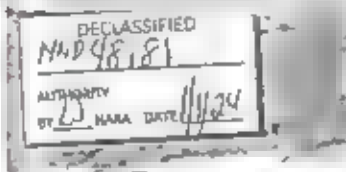
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nam in 1961, it was prohibited from participation in combat. On 6 December 1961, the JCS permitted use of Farmgate aircraft on combat missions with a combined US/Vietnamese crew aboard as part of the combat crew training requirements in RVN. This was amplified on 26 December when the JCS said that Farmgate aircraft could be employed on combat missions only when VNAP did not have the capability. This latest instruction also said that combat training mission with joint crews would be conducted so the Vietnamese crews could take over the missions at the earliest possible time. The rules dictated that the aircraft be based in the country and be of the same type as the host country if the effort was to be plausibly deniable. The requirement for host country crew members and use of host country type planes had been a continuous limiting factor in Farmgate operations in RVN.<sup>265</sup>

The Royal Laotian Air Force at the beginning of June possessed 13 T-28's, 12 C-47's and 32 liaison type pilots. The aircraft available to them were 24 T/RT-28's, 13 C-47's and a mixture of liaison aircraft. There were not enough RLAF pilots to man the available RLAF pilots to man the available RLAF planes as well as the Farmgate effort. Furthermore, the AA environment in Laos was believed much more sophisticated than in RVN and sooner or later, MACV felt, a US crew would be shot down, making the operation neither covert or deniable. The use of A-1E or B-57 aircraft in Laos was not compatible with the RLAF current or projected aircraft programs, making the introduction of these planes to Laos not

\* On 25-26 May, US civilian pilots (Air America) were checked out by the SAW detachment and used to augment RLAF pilot resources. However, fear of discovery caused the American Embassy to discontinue their use. Subsequently, ten former RLAF pilots were checked out for the task.

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deniable. In view of these considerations, COMUSMACV did not consider feasible the introduction of a Farngate operation to Laos. "If and when the US is willing to accept the known risks involved", COMUSMACV said, "it seems we should plan for overt operations with modern air".<sup>266.</sup>

The T-28 strength available for the effort in Laos received a sudden boost in late June when 15 T-28's arrived at Udorn after being directed there by the JCS. The last aircraft was in place on 1 July. The planes were marked with Laos markings and ready for use by Laos and Thailand pilots.<sup>267.</sup>

The arrival of these 15 aircraft placed the total number of T-28's in Thailand at 33. Three of these belonged to the SAW detachment which also had another T-28 undergoing major repairs in Vietnam.<sup>268.</sup> The aircraft were expected to play an increasingly important role in support of the Royal Laotian Government in its struggle against the Pathet Lao/Viet Minh forces which had captured the Plain of Jars.

#### Increase in F-100's at Takhli

At Takhli, Thailand, where six USAF F-100 aircraft were based and supported by the 331st Air Base Squadron, action was considered during the period to increase the detachment to 18 aircraft. The F-100's at Takhli were TAC rotational aircraft and between January and June 1964, detachments from the 27th TFW, the 401st TFW and the 3d TFW did rotational tours at Takhli.<sup>269.</sup>

In late February, when the situation in Laos began to deteriorate, consideration was given to increasing the detachment at Takhli to 18 aircraft. It was believed that the base could handle the increase as it had a previous increased commitment in 1962. Based on 18 aircraft flying 21

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sorties per month, POL products on hand were sufficient for 73 days operation. A 30 day munitions supply was also available for 18 aircraft. To handle the necessary housekeeping, augmentation by PACAF of 74 additional personnel was planned. It would be necessary to increase the intra-theater airlift frequency between Clark and Takhli by approximately two weekly flights for resupply support.  
 270.

It was planned that the 18 F-100's of the 832d Air Division, Cannon AFB, New Mexico, would deploy to Takhli between 16 and 20 March. The six plane detachment in place at Takhli would return to Cannon 24 hours after the arrival of the deployed unit.  
 271.

However, on 16 March, the 2d AD, which was alerted for this move, received word from PACAF that the JCS had cancelled the deployment, but that the potential requirement still existed.  
 272.

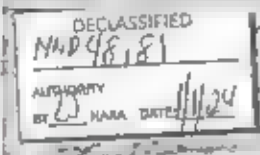
Before the scheduled deployment and the subsequent cancellation, the JCS authorized the Air Force to fly armed F-100 missions up to and along the Mekong River where it constituted the Thailand-Lao border. Authority was not granted to make incursions into Laos.  
 273.

The F-100 pilots at Takhli were instructed that aircraft would be armed during all operations except air refueling training but that a safety pin would be retained in the trigger and the trigger safety switch kept off to prevent inadvertent firing. Although specific rules of engagement had not yet been approved for these operations, pilots were instructed that they retained their inherent right of self defense and were authorized to take such measures as were necessary to protect themselves should they be subjected to hostile actions.  
 274.

#### F-102's at Don Muang, Bangkok

The USAF continued to maintain four F-102's at Don Muang, Bangkok,

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under the code name BELLTONE. These were rotational aircraft placed in Thailand to provide the Thai Air Force with century-series aircraft training for their air defense network. It also provided USAF pilots with experience in air defense operations in Southeast Asia. Two of the F-102's were on five minute alert from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset. Although the BELLTONE operations order directed that F-102's would not be armed while deployed to Thailand, there were stored at Don Muang 32 GAR-I/D's and 16 GAR 2/A's. The F-102's flew a total of 20 sorties<sup>275</sup> a week.

#### Recon Efforts Over Laos

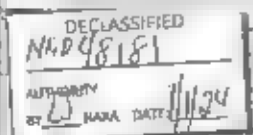
The USAF role in providing aerial reconnaissance over Laos in May and June 1964 and the subsequent use of F-100's to bomb Pathet Lao installations after two Navy recon planes were downed, will be covered in a separate chapter of this history. The recon operations were carried out under the code name "Yankee Team".

#### 2d AD Organization for S/1 Activities in Thailand

A proposed AF organization for handling the Laos situation was submitted by the 2d AD commander to PACAF on 26 May. This considered organizational possibilities in three sets of circumstances, (1) when strike aircraft were committed, and (2) when other (Thai or other nation) aircraft were committed, and (3) the status quo. The problem of control, the 2d AD believed, was complicated by distances involved and by the fact that Ambassador Unger had no immediate contact with the tactical air organization

\* The existing 2d AD organization in Thailand prior to the establishment of the detachment at Udorn consisted of the Hq, 35th Tactical Group at Don Muang, Bangkok, the 331st Air Base Squadron at Takhli Air Base, the 332d Air Base Squadron at Ubon Air Base, and Detachment 1, 35th Tactical Group, at Korat AB.

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charged with the mission. Ambassador Unger in Vientiane, MACV in Saigon, MACTHAI in Bangkok, and MAAG Laos organization in Bangkok, all were interested in and needed authoritative and qualified advice from a USAF contact. Therefore, the 2d AD believed that a senior USAF colonel at Udorn acting as the Deputy 2d AD commander for Laos, would be a useful arrangement. An ASOC established at Udorn would be responsive to the 2d AD AOC at Tan Son Nhut, with a separate director and established AF-comed and secure communications tying him in with the ALO in Vientiane, the commander of the 35th Tactical Group, and with Ubon and Tan Son Nhut.<sup>276.</sup>

A senior 2d AD officer at Udorn would be free to establish the best possible relations with Ambassador Unger, develop best possible sources of tactical intelligence, and perhaps influence the current activities. The 2d, anticipating that a reconnaissance requirement using RF-28's might be imminent, recommended a photo processing cell with a FI capability be sent to Udorn as soon as possible. When USAF aircraft were committed, this structure would be sound and would only require augmentation to operate full time.<sup>277.</sup> Four T-28's had already been obtained from the VNAF and were in place at Udorn. In the event of Thai or other country aircraft being committed, the problem would exist as to how to establish a bilateral or combined force as a function of a US unilateral organization. Other nations might find it more acceptable to commit forces to a Deputy Air Force Component for Laos, short of SEATO entry, if the immediate command and control structure were manned on a joint/combined basis at either Udorn or Korat.

The initial effort for T-28 or other aircraft operating over Laos would be confined to preplanned missions based on the best intelligence and a system which would allow the AF to react to field requests. Rules

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of engagement and authority to strike had to be resolved at the earliest point if the AF effort was to be effective.  
 278.

On 23 and 24 May, General Moore discussed the current situation and desired Air Force actions with Ambassador Unger. The ambassador was most desirous of playing down emphasis upon military operations and was making moves involving military action from a strict political viewpoint, even to the point of making decisions on the type of ordnance used, the employment of other than Laotian pilots, and the targets to be struck. The 2d AD commander expected this exercise of controls to continue until a decision had been made to apply a Faragate or third country force. He felt that when that happened, the operation should be conducted by the 2d AD through ASOC at Udorn.  
 279.

Based on the current situation alone and the Sec Def conference in Honolulu, General Smart agreed that General Moore should have a senior officer at Udorn who would be in charge of all USAF activities there and who would provide liaison, advice, and assistance to Ambassador Unger in Laos. Although he favored a small operations office at Udorn, he did not believe General Moore should establish a 2d ADVON. General Smart felt that all 13th AF responsibilities in Thailand could be handled through the 35th Tactical Group. This would include Detachment 1 of the 27th TFW, the F-102 detachment, the CRC's and all USAF elements at Udorn. There was no reason why 13th AF responsibilities could not be exercised through the 2d AD commander and in turn through his subordinate commander even though they had certain responsibilities to COMUSMACV and COMUSMACTHAI. The 35th Tactical Group, according to PACAF, should be the basic 2d AD organization in Thailand for expanded operations required by the situation. However, General

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Smart was interested in the ideas and recommendations of the 13th AF and 2d AD commanders on this subject.  
280.

In reply to PACAF, General Moore noted that the 35th TG should be the basic organization for expanded operations in Thailand. However, he felt that a 2d AD deputy commander would prevent confusion in the relationship between the 35th's commander and the 2d AD senior officer representative at Udorn. His intent was to establish an operations center with communications directly to 2d AD and responsive to Ambassador Unger's requirement for direction, advice, and, when and if Farmgate type participation were authorized, operational control of tactical air units, whether RIAP or US commandos. Since the Thais were not participating, it was felt best to leave the 35th's commander, Colonel Delwin D. Bentley, in Bangkok to run the Thailand end of the 35th TG's business.  
281.

Regarding the reconnaissance effort, General Moore believed that the RT-28 photo take would be small and could be carried to Tan Son Nhut for processing and returned by the same daily courier that was flying Yankee Team photos to Udorn. The RT-28 effort, he said, would not permit the same coverage. Also, the appearance of jets over the Pathet Lao area was considered important psychologically.  
282.

In an expanded explanation of his proposals for an AF organization to support the US role in Laos, General Moore on 5 June recommended the establishment of Detachment 2, 35th Tactical Group as the organizational element for operation at Udorn. Command and control would be vested in an officer from 2d AD resources who would be designated Deputy Commander for Laos Affairs. The 35th would provide logistic and administrative support. This arrangement would be responsive to the existing situation and

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be capable of expansion if necessary. Detailed manning needs and support requirements were also listed.<sup>283.</sup>

This 2d AD proposal was approved by PACAF on 7 June and the 2d AD commander was authorized to take necessary action to put it into effect. PACAF would publish an order establishing Detachment 2, 35th Tactical Group and the UMD for the Unit. The development of a tent cantonment which the 2d recommended was approved with 13th AF providing the necessary assets. The 2d was authorized to go ahead with exploration of a possible Air America contract for support of expanded USAF operations, which was considered the most desirable method of operation for extended periods, providing cost and construction times were not prohibitive.<sup>284.</sup>

On 10 June, PACAF published a directive establishing Detachment 2, 35th Tactical Group at Udon effective 11 June 1964.<sup>285.</sup>

Meanwhile, the 2d AD had been making plans for the build-up at Udon. The tent cantonment was the most immediate means for getting the base ready and this was expected to be completed in 30 days at a cost of about \$75,000, including electricity, water, sanitation, and messing facilities. A new 300 man cantonment similar to the one at Udon was expected to be completed in eight to eleven months at an estimated cost of \$275,000. The contractor, Air America, had made studies to expand its operation to support expanded AF operations.<sup>286.</sup>

With the proposed build-up, it was estimated that there would be 574 people at Udon. These would be in the following activities:<sup>287.</sup>

Det 6, 1st ACW	85
Flight Fac. and Nav aids.	32
1st Mobile (augm)	25

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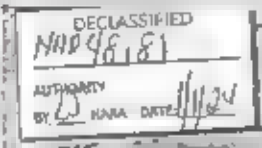
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Hospital (Disp.)	6
ORP	55
AOC	112
Air Port Det.	32
Weather Det	8
6 RF-101 plus PPC	61
3 C-47	26
Transient, ect.	25
Support	107
	<hr/>
Total	574

Summary

In the period between January 1964 and July 1964, the 2d Air Division underwent radical changes in its composition and in its employment. New A-1E aircraft had replaced the aging B-26's and T-28's. A major expansion program for the VNAF was under way and there were plans for building its strength up to six A-1H squadrons compared with two at the beginning of the year. USAF and US Army objectives were brought closer together under the Chien Thang Pacification Plan which was put into effect by the new Khanh regime which took power in a bloodless coup on 30 January. New commanders for both the 2d Air Division and the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, brought a fresh and more cooperative approach to the war effort. Development of USAF facilities in both Vietnam and Thailand was widening the base from which operations could be conducted, both in and out of the borders of Vietnam. The Tactical Air Control System was

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gradually being improved to allow for more effective use of air in support of ground operations. It was a period in which the Air Force could look back on some progress in its organizational structure but in terms of winning the war against the communist guerrilla effort, this progress was less evident.

The situation in which the Air Force found itself in the middle of 1964 was lucidly explained by one of the 2d AD's most experienced commanders, Colonel Benjamin S. Preston, Jr., who held commands at Da Nang and Bien Hoa, two of the key Air Force operating bases in Vietnam. Said  
288,  
Colonel Preston:

...Anyone who seriously thinks we can ever win this war under the present terms of reference is extremely naive or optimistic to the point of having a bad case of "euphoria", as General Maxwell Taylor puts it. If we are resolute in our effort to support the RVN in their fight against capture by Ho Chi Minh and Mao and if we increase our aid and assistance to the maximum levels which the RVN can absorb and use, and if we exercise tolerance and resist our American propensity for trying to remake nations and people in our exact image, then I think we can maintain the status quo at least, and probably help the Government of RVN to attain a more dominant position.

This is not to infer that we, or the RVN are using ineffectual tactics. It is simply my belief that the Viet Cong drive cannot be decisively blunted until it is cut off from external sources of men and materiel, isolated from control and direction by external powers, and denied the safe haven ... of Cambodia.

Our Commander-in-Chief has obviously recognized the futility of tactics which are based upon bailing out a leaky boat, rather than plugging the leaks, by the warnings he has given to those who persist in their campaigns of subversive invasion of their neighbors. If Ho Chi Minh can be dissuaded from

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his policy of aggression and if Sihanouk... made to understand very pointedly that his "safe haven" policy is unsafe for his continued welfare, then the campaign against the VC here in the RVN should proceed to a successful conclusion.

...I am personally convinced that it will take a demonstration of our will to use power before our warnings become credible to him. This involves risk, of course, but the alternative is eventual loss of Southeast Asia - either at the bargaining table or by eventual communist capture. Their pattern is so standard that we should have no illusions as to their intentions... Now they have half of Vietnam, and by virtually over-running Laos, they surely do not now intend to settle for less than half of that country... The only thing they understand and respect is superior power and strength when they know it will be used against them. I suggest that this situation is tailor-made for the use of air power as an emphatic convincer, without committing ourselves to a ground war at the outset... It appears to me that time for decision is running out...

In the light of events which were to take place in August of 1964, these comments by an Air Force commander who had spent a highly eventful year in Vietnam proved to be apropos to the situation. They reflected the general feeling which was increasing in the Southeast Asia military organization that a convincing use of the air power available to the US in that area could play a bigger role in attaining ultimate victory for the US.

For the 2d Air Division, the first months of 1964 were months of major changes which were to open the way for a more effective use of air power for the long struggle ahead. The status of the command was summarized on 20 June by the departing Director of Operations, Colonel Donald 289.  
 H. Ross, who said:

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...2d AD is a far more effective command today than it was prior to 1964. Although we are temporarily limited in numbers of strike aircraft, we enjoy much higher morale, we have better quality people across the board and we're getting along better with the Army. The Headquarters is a better place in which to work. The staff is operating as a cooperative team and enjoys an atmosphere of mutual respect.

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# CHRONOLOGY

2d AIR DIVISION  
Tan Son Nhut, Vietnam  
Jan. 63 - Aug. 64

January 63  
15

Det 2, 62220 Air Base Squadron organized at Soc Trang, Vietnam.

Jan - June 63

1000 man reduction to US military ceiling in RVN. USAF portion tentatively established at 278 spaces.

February 63  
1

IV Corps ASOC, Southern Delta, formed

2

First trip of 13th Air Force leased LST arrived in Da Nang. The LST is used for ammo and vehicle shipments from Manila to Saigon and Da Nang, RVN.

2

Ammunition dump constructed & operation started at Soc Trang, RVN.

15

Det. 12, 30th Weather Sq. Takhli Air Base, Thailand, organized.

28

Det, 47th Air Rescue Service departed Takhli, Thailand.

March 63  
11

Command pouch mail service initiated between Headquarters 13th Air Force and Headquarters 2d Air Division, Tan Son Nhut, Republic of Vietnam.

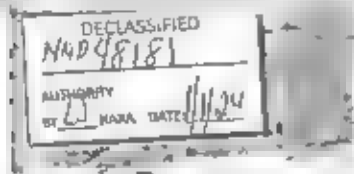
15

III Corps ASOC formed in Saigon. "Sidewinder" Alternate Low Priority Interdiction Target, (ALPIT) program started in Phuoc Binh Thanh special war zone.

31

Regular scheduled sealift service between Saigon and other Vietnam ports commenced.

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CHRONOLOGY (Cont'd)

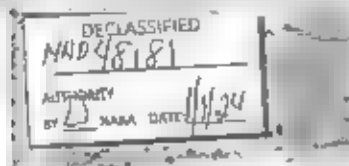
April 63

- 1 First airstrike under ALPIT
- 1 Det 5 & 6 of 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Sq. designated at Don Muang Airport Thailand & Tan Son Nhut respectively.
- 1 315th Troop Carrier Group (Combat Cargo) redesignated 315th TCG Assault; Det 1, Hq 6010th Tac Gp at Korat AB, Thailand reorganized.
- 8 Following Units Reorganized  
25th Tac Fighter Sq.; 509th Fighter Inter. Sq.; 16th Fighter Inter. Sq.; 4th Fighter Inter. Sq.; 40th FTS; and 68th FTS.
- 16 777th Troop Carrier Sq with 16 C-123 aircraft arrived at Da Nang, Vietnam.
- 18 Det. 3, 6220th AB Sq organized at Can Tho Airport, RVN. 13th Reconnaissance Technical Sq. constituted & activated at TSN, RVN.
- 29 Two additional B-26 aircraft received from Air America.

May 63

- 11 Six alert house trailers arrived at Saigon's waterport: two for Da Nang, two for Pleiku, one for Soc Trang, and one for Tan Son Nhut.
- 15 Chordwise cracks discovered in B-26 wing panels.
- 16 PACAF authorized Farmgate to fly regular pay war sorties.
- 17 Three additional alert house trailers arrived, two for Soc Trang and one for Da Nang.
- 24 Following detachments organized at locations indicated.  
Det 6, 8th Aerial Port Sq; Qui Nhon AB RVN.  
Det 7, 8th Aerial Port Sq; Can Tho Airport RVN.  
Det 1, 6222nd AB Sq; Qui Nhon AB RVN.
- 24 Two U-3B aircraft received from 21.
- 28 Ranch Hand, Mule Train, Saw Duck aircraft maintenance assets were consolidated under 6220 AB Sq. Chief of Maintenance pending USAF approval.

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CHRONOLOGY (Cont'd)

May 63 (cont'd)  
30

First A-1E arrived in RVN, assigned to Bien Hoa.

June 63  
3

Det 5, 8th Aerial Port Sq. moved from Ubon Airfield, Thailand to Bien Hoa AB, RVN

9

Six vans fully equipped and having associated power generators and air conditioning arrived at Tan Son Nhut to provide limitedfield maintenance in RVN.

9

Exercise Tidal Wave went into effect at Don Huang AB, Thailand, consisting of 18 C-124's and 14 C-130.

17

19th Tac Sup Sq activated at Bien Hoa AB RVN.

July 63  
1

Det 1, 6091st Reconnaissance Sq moved from TSN, RVN to Kadana Air Base, Okinawa

5

Standardization Evaluation Section of 2d Air Div, established within 200C.

7

33d, 34th & 35th are constituted as Hq, Tac. Gps; 34th CAMRON Sq set up.

Following units, reconstituted & redesignated.

Old Designation	New Designation
35th Base Hq & AB Sq	35th Air Base Sq
331st Base Hq & AB Sq	331st Air Base Sq
332d Base Hq & AB Sq	332d Air Base Sq
33d Base Hq & AB Sq	33d Air Base Sq
37th Base Hq & AB Sq	37th Air Base Sq
34th Base Hq & AB Sq	34th Air Base Sq
33d Fld Main Sq	33d CAMRON
33d USAF Hospital	33d USAF Disp.
Hq&Hq Sq 23d AB Gp	Hq 23d ABGp

8

Following Units Discontinued  
(PACAF G-44 3 July 63)

UNIT	LOCATION
Hq 6010 Tac Gp	Don Huang Airport, Thailand
6011 AB Sq	Takhl1 AB Thailand
6012 AB Sq	Ubon Airfield, Thailand
6220 AB Sq	TSN Airfield, RVN
6221 AB Sq	Bien Hoa AB RVN
6222 AB Sq	Da Nang Airport RVN
6223 AB Sq	Nha Trang Airport RVN
6220 USAF Disp.	TSN Airfield RVN

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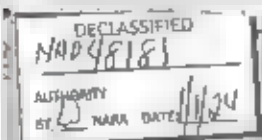
July 63 cont'd

8

Following Units Activated by Dept of Air Force  
(PACAF G-44,3 July 63)

Unit/Detach & Assignment	Location - In RVN
1 Air Commando Sq Composite Asgn: 34 Tac Gp	Bien Hoa AB
Det 1, 1 Air Commando Sq Composite	Pleiku Airport
Det 2, 1 Air Commando Sq Composite	Soc Trang Airport
19 Tac Air Sup Sq (Light) Asgn: 34 Tac Gp	Bien Hoa AB
Hq 23 ABGp Asgn 2d AD	Da Nang Airport
Det 1, Hq 23d ABGp	Qui Nhon AB
23d CAMRON Asgn 23d ABGp	Da Nang Airport
Hq 33 Tac Gp Asgn 2d AD	TSN
Det 1, 33d Tac Gp	TSN
Det 2, 33 Tac Gp	Can Tho Airport
33d AB Sq Asgn 33d Tac Gp	TSN
33d CAMRON Asgn 33d Tac Gp	TSN
33d USAF Disp- 33d Tac Gp	TSN
37th AB Sq Asgn 33d Tac Gp	Nha Trang Airport
Hq 34th Tac Gp Asgn 2d AD	Bien Hoa AB
Det 1, Hq 34th Tac Gp	Pleiku Airport
Det 2, Hq 34th Tac Gp	Soc Trang Airport
34th AB Sq Asgn 34th Tac Gp	Bien Hoa AB
34th CAMRON Asgn 34th Tac Gp	Bien Hoa AB
Hq 35th Tac Gp Asgn 2d AD	Asgn in Thailand Don Muang Airport
Det 1, Hq 35th Tac Gp	Korat AB

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# CHRONOLOGY (Cont'd)

## July 63 cont'd

8

Unit/Detach & Assignment	Location in Thailand
35th AB Sq Asgn 35th Tac Gp	Don Muang Airport
331st AB Sq Asgn 35th Tac Gp	Takhli AB
332d AB Sq Asgn 35th Tac Gp	Ubon Airfield

## August 63

20

2d Air Div OPLAN 301-64 was implemented starting the continuous 24-hour operation of a VFR, non-tactical flight following system through RVN

## September 63

1

Class "B" USAF dispensaries established at the 34th Tac Gp, Bien Hoa AB; 23d ABGp, Da Nang; and 35th Tac Gp, Don Muang

1

First two fact finder photo trailers arrived at Tan Son Nhut

1-17

Two Ranch Hand C-123s deployed to Bangkok, Thailand at the request of Thailand Government to combat an invasion of Bombay Locust.

15

19th Tac Air Support Sq at Bien Hoa AB RVN became combat ready

15-20

Operational suitability test were conducted to determine the feasibility of utilizing armor on all C-123's in Vietnam

## October 63

1

PACAF/MATS Air Terminal consolidation became effective. 8th Aerial Port Sq assumed the traffic function responsibility at both Don Muang, Thailand and Tan Son Nhut, RVN

1

Det 3, 6003 Sup Sq reorganized at Takhli AB, Thailand

1

Det 1 & 5 of Hq 5th Tac Gp discontinued at Don Muang Airport Thailand and Pleiku Airport RVN

1

Det 1 & 2 of 1st Air Commando Sq (Composite at Pleiku & Soc Trang Airport RVN, discontinued.

1

Det 1, Hq 2d AD (Standardization/Evaluation) Designated & organized at Bien Hoa AB RVN

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CHRONOLOGY (Cont'd)

November 63

- 1 Overthrow of Dien regime by MRC led by Gen. Doung Van Minh.
- 1 Class "B" Dispensary established at Takli AB, Thailand; asgn. 331st AB Sq
- 12 Colonel Robert L. Loughry assumed command of the 34th Tac Gp vice Colonel Coleman O. Williams Jr.

December 63

- 20 Brig. Gen. Milton B. Adams assumed command of 2d Air Div

January 64

- 24 Maj. Gen. Joseph H. Moore assumed command of 2d Air Div vice Brig Gen Milton B. Adams
- 30 Control RVN taken over by Maj Gen Nguyen Khanh in a bloodless coup, deposing the military junta which had been ruling RVN since the Nov 63 coup.

February 64

- 1 Colonel Benjamin S. Preston, Jr. assumed command 34th Tac Gp vice Col Robert J. Loughry
- 1 Colonel Dabrin D. Bentley assumed command of 35th Tac Gp vice Col Charles H. Christman

April 64

- 8 Det 1, 619th Tactical Control Sq activated at Da Nang RVN
- 20 SEATO exercise "Air Boon Choo" started at Don Muang

June 64

- 11 Det 2, 35th Tac Gp designated and organized at Udorn Airfield, Thailand

May 30

- First A-1E's arrived in RVN and were assigned to Bien Hoa

August 64

- 10 First three of six Australian Caribou arrived in Vietnam; asgn to Tan Son Nhut

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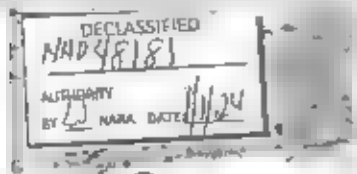
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# G L O S S A R Y

A	Attack
AA	Anti-aircraft
AAE	Army Aviation Elements
AAGS	Army Air Group System
ACS	Air Commando Squadron
AC&W	Air Control & Warning
AD	Air Division
AD-6	Navy designation of A-1H Skyraider
ADVON	Advance Echelon
AF	Air Force
AFAG	Air Force Advisory Group
AFCC	Air Force Component Command
AFLC	Air Force Logistics Command
AIO	Air Liaison Officer
ALPT	Alternate Low Priority Interdiction Target
AM	Amplitude Modulated
AN/ABC	Radio Set
AOO	Air Operations Center
ASOC	Air Support Operations Center
B	Bomber
BAR	Browning Automatic Rifle
C	Cargo
CH-21	Helicopter Cargo
CINCPAC	Commander-In-Chief Pacific
COIN	Counterinsurgency
Comdr.	Commander
COMUSMACV	Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
COMUSMACVTHAI	Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Thailand
CONUS	Continental United States
CP	Command Post
CRS	Combat Reporting Center
CRP	Control and Report Post
CTOC	Corps Tactical Operations Center
CTZ	Corps Tactical Zones
CV-28	Caribou aircraft for US Army
DCS	Deputy Chief of Staff
Det.	Detachment
Disp.	Dispensary
DOD	Department Of Defense
Ea	Each
F	Fighter
FAC	Forward Aircraft Control
FM	Frequency Modulated
FRAG	Fragmentary, Fragmentation
F/RF	Fighter/Reconnaissance Fighter
FY	Fiscal Year

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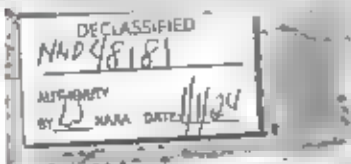
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GLOSSARY (Cont.)

GAR	Guided Air Rocket
GNU	Government of National Union
GP	Group
GVN	Government, Vietnam
H	Helicopter
HSAS	Headquarters Support Activity, Saigon
ICC	International Control Commission
IR	Infrared
IRAN	Inspection and Repair As Needed
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JCS	Joint General Staff
JOC	Joint Operations Center
JUSMAG	Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group
L	Liaison
MAC	Military Assistance Command
MACTHAI	Military Assistance Command Thailand
MACV	Military Assistance Command Vietnam
MAG	Military Assistance Group
MAGAF	Military Advisory Group Air Force
MAP	Military Aid Program
MATS	Military Air Transport Service
	Mark
mm	Millimeter
MRC	Military Revolutionary Council
Msg.	Message
m.p.h.	Miles per hour
NAS	Naval Air Station
NM	Nautical Mile
O-1F	Observation aircraft
Ops	Operations
PACAF	Pacific Air Force
PACOM	Pacific Command
PARC	Para Rescue
PBT	Special Zone in VN
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
PI	Philippines
PL	Pathet Lao
POL	Petroleum, Oil, Lubricants
PFC	Photo Processing Cell
PFC	Photo Recon Cell
PSP	Perforated Steel Planking

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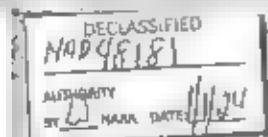
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# GLOSSARY (Cont.)

R	Reconnaissance
RB	Reconnaissance Bomber
RC-47	Reconnaissance version of C-47 aircraft
RF	Reconnaissance Fighter
RLAF	Royal Lontian Air Force
RME	Raymond-Morrison-Kundeem (construction Co.)
RT	Reconnaissance Trainer
RTAF	Royal Thai Air Force
RTF	Reconnaissance Task Force
RVN	Republic Vietnam
RVNAF	Republic Vietnam Armed Forces
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SAMA	Sacramento Air Materiel Area
SAR	Sea Air Rescue
SAW	Special Air Warfare
SEA	Southeast Asia
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation
SO	Special Order
SOI	Special Operating Instructions
T	Trainer
TAC	Tactical Air Command
TACAN-GCA	Tactical Air Navigation-Ground Control Approach
TACP	Tactical Air Control Parties
TACS	Tactical Air Control System
TARC	Tactical Air Reconnaissance Center
TASS	Tactical Air Support Squadron
TCG	Troop Control Group
TIDY	Temporary Duty
TFW	Tactical Fighter Wing
TG	Tactical Group
TMC	Transport Movement Control
TOC	Tactical Operations Center
TO/S	Table of Organization & Equipment
T/RT-28	Tactical Reconnaissance Trainer
TSN	Tan Son Nhut
TV	Television
UH	Utility Helicopter
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
UMD	Unit Manning Document
UN	United Nations
UNAAF	United Nations Armed Forces
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAF	United States Air Force
USASCV	USA Support Command Vietnam
USMACTHAI	US Military Assistance Command Thailand

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GLOSSARY (Cont.)

USMACV	US Military Assistance Command Vietnam
USMC	US Marine Corps
USNVA	<i>United States Navy Training Unit</i>
USSEASIA	US Forces Southeast Asia
UTT	Utility Tactical Transport
VC	Viet Cong
VNAF	Vietnamese Air Force
WD-1/TT	A type of field wire

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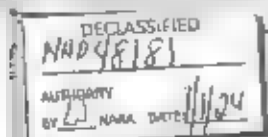


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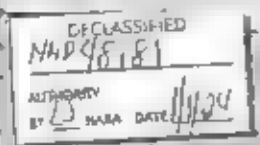


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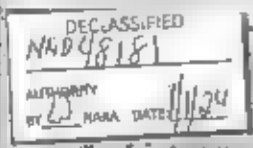


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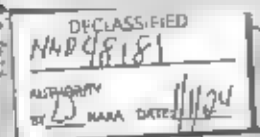
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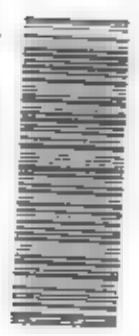
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# **CHAPTER TWO**

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## **USAF OPERATIONS IN RVN**

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## HISTORY, 2d AIR DIVISION

JANUARY-JUNE 1964

### Chapter II

#### USAF OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM

Prepared by Kenneth Sams,  
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## FOREWORD

This chapter covers USAF air operations in the Republic of Vietnam for the period January through June 1964. It is one of four chapters making up the history of 2d Air Division for the period. Other chapters cover organization, logistic support, and lessons learned. Although these chapters are mainly concerned with the January-June period, background material going back to 1962 is included in many areas.

Assisting the historian in preparation of this volume were two airmen who helped out considerably in research, typing, and administration. These are TSgt Robert A. Young and SSgt, Frank A. Green. The writer also wishes to thank the many personnel in the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, and the 2d Air Division who were most cooperative in providing necessary material.

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C O N T E N T S

USAF Operations in Vietnam

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## CHAPTER II

### USAF OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM

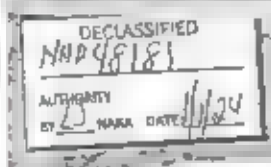
#### Background

The pattern of US Air Force operations in Vietnam as it entered its third year was vastly different from that envisioned when the first "Jungle Jim" detachment arrived at Bien Hoa with eight T-28's and four B-26's on 14-16 November 1961. This original operation was a covert one. The USAF role was considered in terms of crews in civilian clothes, working behind enemy lines, going into small unprepared fields in the black of night without lights, picking up informers and equipment and delivering special teams to spy on or harass the Viet Cong. The first arriving crews even had to sign a form in which they agreed that if captured or shot down, they would deny they were members of the US Air Force.<sup>1</sup>

The Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) in this early period consisted of one squadron of A-1H Skyraiders. Moreover, it was in disfavor with the Diem Government following the attack by two Skyraiders on the president's palace in February 1962. Aircraft were restricted to 100 pound bombs which could only be carried on certain air routes. No target could be hit without approval by Diem or the Joint General Staff (JGS) and this sometimes took up to six days, mainly because of difficulty in tracking down approving officials. Also, the VNAF had no air logistics system, no reconnaissance capability, and in early 1962, it had to close down its flying school to provide pilots for a newly formed T-28 squadron.<sup>2</sup>

It soon became obvious that the Air Force role would have to be an overt one. An Air Control system would have to be established, a VNAF

\* The first USAF strike mission was flown by T-28's on 26 January 1962 with no Vietnamese crew member aboard. The order to strike came at 1400 hours and the planes were over their targets, too late for recall, when another order came in at 1500 hours saying not to attack unless a VNAF crew member was aboard each aircraft.



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reconnaissance and logistics capability built, the target approval system streamlined, and most important, the USAF would have to directly augment the VNAF strike capability. Taking care of these matters was the immediate task of the 2d ADVON. The Tactical Air Control System (TACS), for example, was created on 14 January 1962, only 14 days after work started on it.<sup>3.</sup>

In 1962, the original USAF "Jungle Jim" detachment was supplemented by C-123 transports for logistics support, additional C-47's for night flare missions and RF-101's for reconnaissance. A recon tech squadron was based at Tan Son Nhut. Radar, communications, and ALO's and FAC's to support the new Tactical Air Control System were brought in. An intensive training program was begun to provide the VNAF with an effective air arm and action was taken to provide necessary supporting activities. New support type Air Force organizations were also established. The permanency of the new Air Force establishment was recognized in October 1962 when the 2d ADVON was discontinued and the 2d Air Division established.<sup>4.</sup>

The US Army, also responding to the growing crisis in South Vietnam, moved helicopters, Otters, Caribou and Mohawks into the theater. These aircraft, operating under an Army Air Request Net (AARN), took a role in support of ground operations. These moves followed the establishment of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), on 8 February 1962.

By 1963, a new and greatly expanded pattern of Air Force operations in support of the counterinsurgency effort had been created. Sorties by F-28's and B-26's of the "Farm Gate" unit at Bien Hoa, which numbered 251 in January 1962, rose to 1613 in October 1963. The C-123 squadron, which

\* See Hist. 2d ADVON, 15 Nov 1961 - 8 Oct 62, for history of growth of Air Force establishment in 1962.

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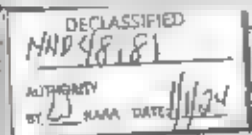
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flew about 300 sorties in January 1962 carrying about 1600 troops and 400 tons of cargo supplies, was supplemented by two additional squadrons during the year. In November 1963, the C-123's flew more than 2500 sorties, carrying more than 14,000 troops and 3,800 tons of supplies. By December 1963, the USAF was using RB-26's, RB-57's and RF-101's to perform about 250 recon sorties a month over Vietnam and Laos. A defoliation program, started on a test basis in early 1962 after a "Ranch Hand" detachment of three C-123's arrived in Vietnam in December 1961, was continued in 1962 and 1963. A squadron of Q-17's was established at Bien Hoa in July 1963 to take over the job of forward air control in support of ground operations. Train and convoy escort missions and night flare missions were added to the growing range of Air Force activity. In effect, the 2d Air Division, as it entered 1964, had grown from a tiny covert detachment not really sure of its job into a combat organization openly fighting a real war.

5.  
 1962-1963  
 [In this two year formative period, the air organization in Vietnam was learning as much as it could about counterinsurgency fighting and at the same time, it was teaching as much as it could to the Vietnamese Air Force. / The governing doctrine of all USAF activity was that eventually the VNAF would take over the air role completely. In discussing the progress made by the USAF in its first two years, Maj. Gen. Rollin P. Anthis, 2d AD commander up to January 1964, said:

...The position today looks relatively good because it evolved from such a very modest origin. In terms of absolute gains, I feel the Air Force has not made the progress that it should have made. I do not feel that we have taken full advantage of the opportunities

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offered us to improve our equipment and to evaluate and update the doctrines that have held ascendance for so long. We have not learned our lessons to be learned...

...In this environment, we continually find that we are expected to fight a war yet the rules and restrictions applied are oriented toward peacetime operations. We should formalize the wartime procedures and policies that are inherent in this type warfare and establish the exceptions to peacetime that have to apply...

...We must be ready and willing to make changes if such changes serve to strengthen our position in demonstrating the superior potential of tactical air power...

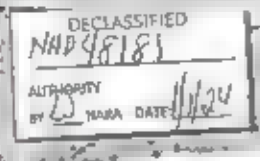
#### Overall Status of Operations in 1964

This was the situation in January 1964, but in the ensuing six month period, the pattern was to change almost as much as it had in the previous two years. A new government for Vietnam with a more aggressive policy for military operations, the introduction of more effective strike aircraft for both the USAF and the VNAF, an intensified program for educating ground commanders on the use of air strikes, and a general step-up in the intensity of the war were to result in a greater and more effective use of USAF/VNAF strike power. New commanders for the 2d Air Division and MACV during the period resulted in improved relations between the US Army and the USAF.

The extent of the USAF commitment is evident in its experience during the first half of 1964. In 1964, the USAF was flying 125 of the 757 aircraft based in Vietnam. Only about 30 of these were USAF strike planes belonging to the 1st Air Commando Squadron (ACS), the rest being used for

\* In a summary of its accomplishments from 1 May 1963 to 31 July 1964 the 1st ACS reported that its aircraft flew 17,778 sorties for a total

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transport, reconnaissance, observation, and psychological warfare. The strike planes (B-26's, T-28's and A-1E's) in the first half of 1964, expended 1,370,500 pounds of bombs, 1,135,000 pounds of napalm, 2577 rockets of 2.75 inch size, and 642,695 rounds of 20 mm and .50 caliber ammunition against Viet Cong personnel, structures and sampans.<sup>7.</sup>

Flying 5526 strike sorties for the period, mainly in the III and IV Corps areas, these aircraft killed 1899 Viet Cong for an average of .34 killed per sortie. The USAF accounted for 26% of the 7258 VC's claimed to have been killed by all action between January and June 1964. In the same period, seven USAF planes (six T-28's and one B-26) were destroyed as a result of enemy action and another four were destroyed for other reasons. Eight USAF personnel died in combat in this period, 20 were wounded in action, and one missing in action.<sup>8.</sup>

Combat strikes made up only part of the total USAF commitment to the Vietnamese struggle. The 52 C-123's of the 315th Troop Carrier Group, through non combat aircraft, played a key role in the struggle by flying

of 28,794 hours of combat support. In that period, its T-28's, B-26's, and A-1E's delivered 7,726,370 pounds of bombs and rockets and 1,391,096 rounds of .50 caliber and 20 mm ammunition. Results of combat sorties were 4122 enemy killed, 509 enemy wounded, 5984 structures destroyed, 3611 structures damaged, 698 enemy supply and transport boats destroyed and 306 boats damaged. The killed and wounded figures were based on post strike investigation of target areas or VC prisoner interrogations and did not include a large number of unverified results, particularly since the VC customarily carried their dead and wounded with them when they withdrew. In any case, the 1st ACS, its 1000 people making up about one-fourth of one percent of the total fighting strength in Vietnam, accounted for 20% of the known enemy casualties. The estimated 400,000 people under arms under GVN control accounted in the same period for 20,000 killed. (History 34th Tac Gp. Jan-June 1964 Tab E.)

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troops and cargo to combat areas, dropping flares over outposts under attack and defoliating areas where the VC hid out. Most important, it was carrying out a historic airlift in a country where air represented the only means of transport between government controlled segments. The civic action aspect of the C-123 role was highly important. These aircraft, in the first half of 1964, flew 16,546 sorties with total flying hours numbering 19,708 for an average of 68.4 hours per aircraft. In that period, it hauled 36,545 tons of cargo and passengers, much of this tonnage going into remote, less than 2,000 foot long, pierced-steel plank-  
ing (PSP) landing strips, in areas where the VC were located only a short  
distance from the fields.<sup>9.</sup>

The four U-10's of the 1st ACS, while committed to the psywar job of dropping leaflets and making propaganda broadcasts, experienced more battle damage than any other section of the 1st ACS. These planes, in the first half of 1964, flew 1705 sorties covering the entire country. While difficult to ascertain mission results, these small planes were credited with causing 124 VC's to defect after two nights of loudspeaker operations in the Kien Hoa Province. A one week effort in the Da Nang area resulted in 484 defectors walking into Government controlled areas with their weapons and the security-granting psywar leaflets dropped by  
the U-10's.<sup>10.</sup>

The 24 O-1F's assigned to the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron at Bien Hoa in 1964, also played a role in the counterinsurgency struggle by providing forward air control support and VNAF pilot and observer training. Between January and June 1964, the 19th TASS flew 6543 combat missions logging 8422:05 hours, mainly on low level forward air control duties which drew a lot of dangerous VC ground fire. In addition, the squadron

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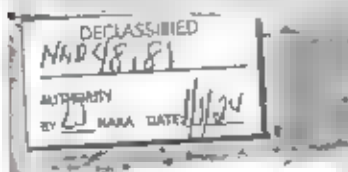
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flew 2717 training sorties in 2739:45 flying hours during which it trained and graduated 91 Vietnamese pilots and observers. Adding 157 test flights of 120:05 hours duration, this squadron amassed the large total of 9417 missions and 11,276:55 flying hours. Members of the squadron, for their substantial contribution to the war, were awarded 149 Air Medals, one DFC, one Silver Star and one Air Force Cross. Two pilots of the 19th TASS died in the first half of 1964, one of them, Captain Uwe T. Scobel, being shot down by a Cambodian fighter while on a FAC mission near the Cambodian border on 19 March 1964. The other, Captain Richard Whitesides, was missing in action and presumed dead on 26 March after his flaming O-1F was observed plummeting over a jungle ridge of one of the most treacherous areas of Vietnam, the Ashau Valley along the Laotian border.<sup>11.</sup>

The other 2d AD role in the counterinsurgency struggle, aerial reconnaissance, also continued in its third year at a fairly routine level. At the start of 1964, recon craft, controlled by Det. 1, 33rd Tactical Group, consisted of two RB-26's, six RF-101's, and three RB-57's. By the end of June, the two RB-26's had been phased out along with all B-26's in Vietnam and the strength of the RF-101's was raised from six to ten as a result of the Laotian crisis in May. In the first half of 1964, the recon detachment flew 1340 sorties and 2899:15 flying hours, a slight increase over the activity for the last half of 1963. RF-101 flights made up more than two-thirds of the total, consisting of 908 sorties and 1908:15 flying hours.<sup>12.</sup> The RB-26's, whose activity in 1964 was mainly limited to surveillance of shipping in the southern coast of Vietnam, were grounded and returned to the US on 20 March. The recon craft of the 2d AD provided a capability for day, night, high and low altitude photography as well as an infra-red capability.

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This was essential for air operations in the Vietnam environment, which according to Maj. Gen. Rollin P. Anthis, was unlike the reconnaissance situation in World War II or Korea.

In the first half of 1964, the 125 aircraft of the U.S. Air Force flew 33,046 missions logging 47,319 flying hours. Combat support missions made up 54% of this total. These were flown by C-123's, C-47's, U-10's, and O-1F's and included air transport, forward air control, psy-war, escort, visual recon, airborne alert, flare drop and combat support liaison missions. Support missions flown by all the USAF aircraft types in Vietnam and including crew training, search and rescue, medical evacuation, deployment and test missions, made up 31% of the total missions flown. Combat advisory missions flown by F-28's, B-26's, A-1H's, RB-57's, and RF-101's accounted for 15% of the total, including interdiction, close air support, air cover, escort, photo recon, visual recon, and airborne alert missions.

In the same period, the Vietnamese Air Force, with 295 aircraft as of 30 June 1964, flew 39,504 missions logging 53,996 flying hours. The VNAF used F-28's and A-1H's on combat missions, C-47's, U-10's and CH-34's on combat support missions, and all these types on general support missions. The chart below lists accomplishments for USAF and VNAF in this period.

<u>USAF</u>		
<u>Type Mission</u>	<u>Number Flown</u>	<u>Hours Flown</u>
Combat Advisory	5116	9136
Combat Support	17882	23952
Support	10048	14231
Total	33046	47319

\* See Chapter I, Hist. 2d AD, Jan-June 1964, pp 110-115 for a discussion of reconnaissance problems.

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<u>Type Mission</u>	<u>Number Flown</u>	<u>Hours Flown</u>
Combat	6111	11428
Combat Support	15557	24017
Support	<u>17836</u>	<u>18551</u>
Total	39504	53996

This air Force commitment in Vietnam in 1964, against an enemy highly sophisticated in the art of guerrilla warfare, was vastly different from that anticipated by the "Jungle Jim" unit when it arrived in November 1961. Not only had the size of the commitment increased but the pattern of air operations was in keeping with the overall National Pacification plan which was changed considerably over that which existed in the previous year. There was a growing tendency toward more and more joint operations in which all the US and Vietnamese military resources could be coordinated into the fight against a persistent enemy.

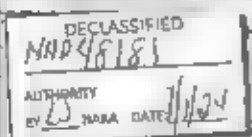
If the Air Force pattern of operations had changed since 1961, the pattern of the Viet Cong's operations had changed even more. In 1961 the VC was dispersed in scattered remnants throughout the country and relying on sporadic acts of terror. In 1964, he had moved into the second stage of guerrilla warfare, making attacks of up to two battalion strength against outposts and hamlets, capturing weapons with practically every attack. He was successfully ambushing government patrols sent out to relieve these outposts and taking a heavy toll. His "hard core" numbers had doubled from the estimated 1961 strength of 16,000; although some 25,000 of his regular and irregular troops were killed or captured in 1962 and the same number in 1963. In 1964, he had full control or partial control of almost half of South Vietnam. He was

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pressing his attacks relentlessly and successfully, increasing his store of weapons and spreading terror in the countryside, particularly in the III and IV Corps areas. He was developing defenses against ground and air attack using modern .50 caliber weapons and primitive stake traps, both of which were effective in the Vietnam environment. He had the advantage of a supply line from North Vietnam and he had a privileged sanctuary in Laos and Cambodia.<sup>14.</sup>

Faced with effective guerrilla tactics carried out by determined and dedicated fighters, many of them former-guerrillas, Air Force and Army planners had a difficult and often frustrating task in deciding how to use modern weaponry effectively within the limits imposed by overall pacification objectives. New detection measures such as infra-red, new type explosives such as the lazy Dog bomb, and new tactics such as low level bundle drops, were considered and in some cases, tested and put into use. Despite new measures, the VC increased in strength and in capability. In October 1963 for example, more aircraft were hit by VC ground fire than had been hit in all of 1962. And the hits were increasing in 1964 with major damage or destruction of aircraft occurring in several cases. So were the frequency and size of his ground attacks.

In June 1964, the Viet Cong controlled 20% of South Vietnam while the Republic of Vietnam controlled 33%. Another 20% of the country was undergoing pacification and 26% had been "cleared", that is, the Army of Vietnam (ARVN) had moved through the area but not secured it. One per cent of the country was neither VC nor Republic of Vietnam (RVN) controlled. It consisted mainly of wasteland areas that neither side was interested in. The chart on the next page shows the number of Vietnamese people included in the above categories:<sup>15.</sup>



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Pacified areas	4,229,395
Areas undergoing pacification	2,611,455
"Cleared" areas	3,371,506
Not VC or RVN	127,340
VC controlled areas	2,541,737
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,881,433</b>

The total Viet Cong "hard core" strength in June was estimated at about 31,000 organized into five regiments, 47 battalions, 132 companies, and 29 platoons. Operating at the village level were an additional 60,000 - 80,000 guerrillas organized into squads and platoons. Viet Cong military actions in June 1964 were still on the battalion level although companies and platoons also operated independently in smaller scale operations.

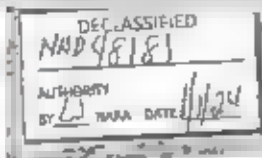
The Viet Cong had divided South Vietnam into five regions with the majority of its forces in the southern half. In terms of the VC Military region organization, the enemy was located as follows.

VC Order of Battle by Military Region

MR	REGT	BN	CO.	PLATOON	STRENGTH
5	3	18	70	15	11,000
7	2	13	26	8	9,100
8	0	8	22	0	4,800
9	0	8	11	3	5,600
SCGD SP RGN	0	0	3	3	500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>31,000</b>

The fact that VC strength was on the rise after two years of fighting and that he had built up his organization to regimental level in preparation for the third phase of guerrilla warfare had to be taken

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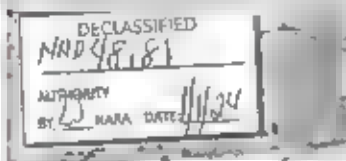
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into account when considering US/Vietnamese military operations against the VC, whether by air, land or water. Furthermore, the VC had merged its organization with Vietnamese life on the province and village level. It was this hard and frustrating reality which made the job of on-the-spot commanders an extremely difficult one and one rarely faced by military commanders in previous wars. There was no one plan which could be considered an easy solution. There was no simple way to bring superior firepower into play as a substitute for close combat. General Giap, who made several visits to his VC field units in 1964, was fighting the war along classic guerrilla lines but he was also learning quickly how to counter the new weapons and techniques used against his forces.

Defense against aircraft was an example. In 1962, VC ground fire resulted in 85 hits against friendly aircraft causing only minor damage. In 1963, there were close to 2,000 hits with several aircraft being seriously damaged or destroyed. In 1962 and 1963, the Viet Cong captured more than 5,700 individual weapons as well as some 500 Browning Automatic Rifles (BARs), thirty .30 caliber machine guns and thirteen .50 caliber machine guns, the latter coming from M-8 armored cars or crashed B-26 aircraft. Automatic weapons used by 32,000 hard core fighters and individual weapons available to 60 to 80 thousand farmer-type guerrillas put a lot of firepower into the air. In addition, the VC were reported as using 81 and 120 mm mortars and 75 mm recoilless rifles as anti-aircraft weapons; however these did not represent much of a threat.<sup>18.</sup>

The VC learned how to mount a captured .50 caliber machine gun on a home made mount that could elevate to 43 degrees to fire at low flying aircraft. This weapon was useful in the mountainous north area

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of RVN against aircraft flying up a valley. The VC also used two .50 caliber U.S. machine guns linked together for two man operation with a Speed Sight and lead/range calculator. One man would establish and maintain the track of the aircraft, automatically aligning the gunner with the track. By looking through the proper lead ring in his portion of the sight, the gunner could align on the aircraft, assured of a proper lead as long as the aircraft was visible through the proper sight opening.  
19.

The VC set up a school in late 1962 for training its people in anti-aircraft firing, using training aids and a scaled physical layout of aircraft on the ground. For offensive fire, the VC, using a platoon, placed an automatic rifle at the apex and at each end of an angle forming a corner of a triangle. Three platoons were arranged to form a large triangle with the sides about 120 meters long, with firing directed by a central controller. Perhaps the most ingenious offensive tactics was the helicopter trap. After picking a target far enough away from supporting forces so that helicopters or strike aircraft were required, the VC put in gun emplacements and connecting trenches situated so as to place weapons fire on the most likely helicopter landing place. With the trap set, the selected hamlet or outpost would be attacked and rescuing helicopter forces would be caught in the VC crossfire. Stakes would be put in other likely landing areas  
20.  
to force the helicopters to use the VC-selected one.

These new weapons and techniques, plus several other innovations, including a primitive early warning system, gave the VC a defense against air attacks that he did not have in 1961 and 1962. They were making Army helicopter tactics more difficult to employ and they were forcing USAF planes to fly higher. With the rapidity of advance and

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the very real chance that the enemy would one day have 20 mm and even 40 mm weapons at his disposal, it was possible to foresee the day when the Army helicopter would be too vulnerable for effective action. It was the recognition of this which in some measure was bringing the Army and Air Force to work more closely together in 1964, to develop means for using rotary and fixed wing aircraft in combination to the greatest advantage. Faced with the realization that the tactics and weapons of 1962 were just not good enough in 1964, both services were busy employing new weapons and tactics.

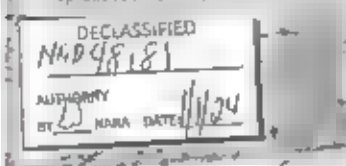
If there was one major hindrance to the pursuit of the war in the air, as well as on the ground, it was the fact that the VC was unidentifiable until he pointed a gun at you. No amount of superior weapons and trained personnel could defeat an enemy with whom contact could not be made. This was just as true in 1964 as it was in 1961. A group of peasants in black shirts and long blue trousers was sighted by a USAF pilot in 1963 working in a rice field. As the pilot turned to take another look, the farmers picked up small arms, fired at the aircraft, then melted into the woods before the plane could make another pass. This was not unusual. Had ground troops gone into the area, they would have found nothing but peasants in their thatched huts and fields. Single farmers working the rice paddies off air bases have been known to set down their farm tools, pick up a rifle out of the grass and fire at a plane. In the Delta area, the VC dug holes along regularly used paths. When an aircraft approached, they jumped into the holes covering themselves with foliage, freezing on the side nearest the plane. When the plane passed, they opened fire. The VC carried weeds or straw on their backs when in groups and when an aircraft flew over, they laid

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**Abstract**



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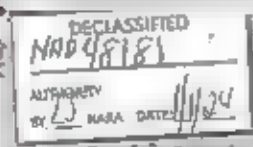
Vietnamese interrogators, it was noted that of all the weapons used against them, the VC's feared air the most. Napalm was the most feared weapon in open country and in villages. Bombs, according to PW's, were often ineffective because of poor accuracy and because the circling of aircraft before the bomb drops gave the VC time to take cover. Delayed action bombs however, forced the VC to evacuate areas where dropped until detonations were observed. \* According to the interrogators, machine guns, cannon and rocket fire from aircraft were less feared than other weapons because they were directed against a small target area. 23

Night flare missions, according to the interrogators, caused the VC to break off their attacks on outposts, mainly because they indicated to the VC that air strikes would follow. The illumination was of little concern to them. The VC recognized, however, that the flares enhanced the morale of the RVNAF. A captured VC directive called for attackers to take advantage of the illumination to locate and destroy by mortar fire communications facilities in the target area. When flares were noted by the VC before a planned attack, the attack might be postponed but if flares were dropped after the VC had penetrated the RVNAF outpost line, the attack continued. 24

While the VC feared air strikes, the interrogators said, these air attacks did not cause a major morale problem, mainly because the VC had learned to protect himself against them. Although there were cases where air strikes appeared to have psychologically affected VC's to the

\* When subjected to artillery attack, the VC employed special people with highly sensitive hearing to count the shots and explosions in order to ascertain whether any of the fired shells were duds. These duds would then be collected and used as mines.

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point where they joined the government side, it was the opinion of the interrogators that air strikes were not a significant factor in inducing the VC to surrender.  
25.

On the other hand, the interrogators were agreed that the strikes on hamlets and the death of civilians as a consequence of them were not a "major direct cause" motivating people to join the VC. While some air strikes on civilian targets were contributing factors, in most instances, persons joining the guerrilla ranks were motivated to do so by different reasons. Only one of the four interrogators knew of two instances when air strikes on hamlets caused the inhabitants to join the VC ranks, but this may have been to avoid further attacks. There were cases where the villagers, expecting air attack after a VC unit moved among them, left the village temporarily to take cover in prepared shelters. In some places, villagers, particularly older people who were less able to flee, blamed the VC for provoking the strike. In other cases, where the VC had been in control for some time and their authority accepted, villagers were likely to blame the GVN for air strikes and civilian deaths.  
26.

The VC fully exploited air strikes for propaganda purposes. They displayed photos of civilians allegedly killed by air strikes and organized protest demonstrations. VC propaganda held that all aircraft were flown by Americans and the deaths were blamed on them. The interrogators said VC sometimes deliberately provoked air strikes on hamlets by firing on passing aircraft so as to exploit the incident for propaganda purposes.  
27.

The war in mid-1964 was being waged with a greater ferocity than at any time since the insurgency began. Total casualties for the Republic

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of Vietnam forces in 1963 were 21,040, including 5,825 killed in action<sup>28.</sup> and 3,265 missing in action or captured. The toll was expected to be much higher in 1964.

This high casualty rate was bound to have an effect on morale, a factor on which the VC placed great importance in their plans for conquest. In the first three months of 1964, the strength of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces dropped from 211,609 to 207,448. Part of this drop was due to an increase in desertions which had risen from 6.8 per thousand per month in late 1963 to 12.05 in the first months of 1964. These months were marked by high casualty rates and an increased tempo<sup>29.</sup> of combat operations. b6

In a document captured with a VC officer on 29 December 1963, VC plans for accomplishing victory by disintegrating "the morale and organization of the enemy army" were revealed. The immediate tactics to be employed for this objective included (1) propagandizing the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) troops to awaken their sense of class and racial rights, (2) proselyting RVNAF troops to support the VC, (3) urging the troops to protest against war, and (4) setting up clandestine revolutionary cells in the RVNAF. "The aim of troop proselyting and of combat are identical", the document read, "destruction of the enemy's<sup>30.</sup> vital force." It added: b6,3

...Marxism-Leninism has correctly analyzed the army's strength. The morale factor is the decisive factor in war. It is even more important than armaments, tactics, and techniques. In order to defeat the enemy, we must undermine the morale of his army and shatter his ranks.

...It is wrong to evaluate the enemy by looking at his strength, equipment, or at some of his combat achievements. To properly

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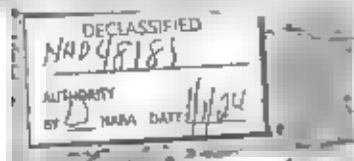
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evaluate him, we must analyze his developments, the combat motivation of the army and see why people fight for the enemy and from which class they come...

The motivation of the Vietnamese armed forces and their willingness to press the struggle against the Viet Cong was certainly tied in with their belief in and loyalty to a central government. To use its resources effectively, this government had to be a strong government. The government of General Khanh which the US promised to back fully was having its troubles in the first half of 1964. There was no political cohesion in the nation and many politicians, both in and out of the armed services, placed their party interests or their personal interests above the national interest. Khanh, in June, called the armed forces the "only organized and disciplined force capable of leading the country", the rest being "a mere scramble for individual interests."<sup>31</sup> The Saigon Post, an English language newspaper said the country's main political hazard was "the proliferation of so many splinter parties and party factions each opposed to the other like fire and water, with no common coherence, which in the long run will provide an almost unsurmountable impediment to any national planning."<sup>32</sup> Khanh was challenged in June by 36 leading Saigon politicians to reorganize the government and give the premiership to a civilian.<sup>33</sup> These demands were to continue and coupled with the religious tension between Catholics and Buddhists which still hung over from Diem days, the future of Khanh's government looked rather grim.

\* In a Catholic demonstration on 7 June, some 50,000 demonstrators marched in protest against what they called "unjust treatment of Catholics". Some of the more militant marchers carried banners reading "Lodge, Go Home" and "Down with Lodge".

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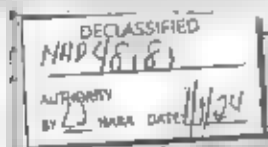
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It was in this explosive and rather unstable environment that the US Air Force in 1964 played its role in the counterinsurgency struggle. It would be unrealistic to treat air operations as something apart from the question of Vietnamese morale, inter-service doctrinal issues and the all important political-economic-psychological aspects of the war. Air operations in Vietnam were only part of a broad pacification program which sought to give as much emphasis to establishing stable government at province or hamlet level as it did to defending that province or hamlet from VC attacks. Nor were air operations limited to offensive "anger strikes". The three squadrons of C-123's belonging to the 315th Troop Carrier Group (TCG) provided the major means of moving people and materiel between the various segments of government controlled areas and as such were an important political-psychological weapon. The strike aircraft and the men who flew them also were not tools for indiscriminate destruction. The A-1E's like the B-26's and the T-28's which preceded them, were drafted into service partly because of the restriction against jets, but they were also selected because they could respond to precise and personal judgment by the pilot who flew them on strike missions. Furthermore, elaborate precautions were self-imposed by the VNAF and the USAF to insure that only legitimate targets were hit.

In the first six months of 1964, the USAF had cleared its inventory in Vietnam of the B-26 and T-28 planes which just could not stand up under the strain. These were being replaced by the more powerful and more adaptable two place A-1E's, the first of which arrived on 30 May. The Air Force during the period was also still working to improve its Tactical Air Control System, particularly communications. There was a problem of shortages of liaison aircraft and forward air controllers

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to fly them. The C-123's were being overpressed to meet the transport needs of the theater and action was under way to get an additional squadron to join the three already performing rigorous duties throughout the country. At mid-year, there was still no professional Air Force rescue unit in Vietnam although the need for one was generally recognized. In May, the 2d AD was called upon to spread its resources into Thailand for support of the neutralist forces in their fight against the Pathet Lao in Laos. On top of its regular load, it had to prepare contingency plans for operations outside the borders of RVN. There was still more to be done to get the USAF and US Army air organizations working closer together even though in the first half of 1964, very significant advances had been made in this area.

In considering the operations of US and Vietnamese air units in support of ground operations in Vietnam, it is difficult to single out a successful trend toward victory. The ARVN in an average week launched about 50 to 70 operations of battalion size or larger against VC concentrations, of which more than two-thirds were "search and clear". Less than half of these large operations could be expected to make contact with enemy. While there were fewer "clear and hold" operations, these were usually of longer duration and often took as many battalions days of operations. "Fix and destroy", "security", and "recon" operations on the battalion level made up the rest of the total large size operations. In addition, every week, there were up to 8,000 small unit operations, ranging from platoon strength to two-company strength, but only a small fraction of these made enemy contact. After each week's fighting, there was an average of about 400 friendly casualties and slightly more VC's killed and wounded in action. Weapons would be exchanged but rarely was

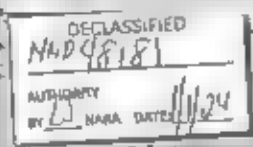
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there any capture and holding of real estate. There would be an H-hour in which ARVN troops would attack, make contact, engage in battle and then retire to original positions, with their casualties. The Viet Cong would make their attacks, usually at night against outposts, kill as many as possible, and then retire, taking their dead and wounded with them where possible. There was a steady attrition of personnel on both sides with the positions after months of fighting being almost the same as they were originally.

Flying in support of these operations and on various other missions in the Republic of Vietnam in July 1964 were 757 aircraft of the USAF, the US Army, the Vietnamese Air Force and the US Marine Corps. There were 25 different types, ranging from RB-57 jet recon aircraft to the O-1F liaison airplane. The US Army had the largest air strength with 310 aircraft of which 187 were UH-1B helicopters. Next in size was the VNAF with 295 planes, including 65 A-1H's. The USAF in the first week of July 1964 had 125 aircraft, of which 53 were C-123's. The USMC had 27 planes, 23 of them being UH-34's.

In an average week's flying between March and July 1964, these aircraft made about 7,400 sorties resulting in an average of 130 VC killed, 200 structures destroyed and 20 sampans sunk. The Army and USMC flew about 80% of these sorties. However, the Army credited each take-off and landing as a sortie. If a Huey carried troops into a battle area, dropped them off and returned to its base, this was credited as two sorties. Air Force flights were of longer duration and USAF/VNAF flying hours generally averaged about 60% of the Army/USMC total weekly flying

\* Figures for this period are used because the MACV Weekly Military Report only began giving complete statistics on air activity after March.



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hours. At least one plane a week could be expected to be shot down or destroyed for other reasons in Vietnam.

In the first six months of 1964, there were 4,620 requests for air, of which 4036 were pre-planned and 584 immediate. Sixty-seven per cent of these requests were flown, (65% of the preplanned and 79% of the immediates). The greatest single reason for not flying requested missions was non-availability of aircraft with ground unit cancellations being the second reason. The 2d AD problem with grounding of the B-26's and curtailment of T-28 flying resulted in an increase in the number of requests for strikes turned down during the second quarter of 1964. Only 5% of the total number of the immediate requests turned down in the first quarter of 1964 were due to non-availability of strike planes while in the second quarter of the year, non-availability of strike planes accounted for 14% of the total number of turndowns. For preplanned strikes, non-availability of strike aircraft accounted for 46.1% of the total number of requests which had to be turned down in the second quarter of 1964 compared with 25.9% for the first quarter.<sup>35</sup>

In the following account of operations for the first six months of 1964, no attempt is made to cover all the operations which took place but only those which were either of special importance or typical of the fighting involved. There can be detected in this account a certain repetition of action and an almost routine pattern of activity in the effort to find and destroy the elusive and adaptable Viet Cong. Although the intensity of the fighting fluctuated at different times. (influenced by coups, holidays, VC tactics and other reasons), the methods employed

\* These requests cover only the B-26, A-1, T-28, U-6, O-1, and U-10 aircraft.

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by both sides changed relatively little and in June, almost the same number of operations were being carried out as in January.

#### Air Combat Support Activities

At the start of the year, the ARVN and Vietnamese Marine Corps had the equivalent of 130 infantry battalions of which 63 were conducting or supporting offensive operations. Another 13 were in formal training, 19 were on static security (not available for operations), 30 were on other security (available for operations on a limited basis), and five were engaged in miscellaneous activities. There were 55 battalion sized operations (employing three or more rifle companies) the first week of January 1964, equalling the average for the last quarter of 1963. Twenty of these operations resulted in contact with the VC. There were 4,517 small unit actions with 79 of these making contact. As usual, most of the action was in III and IV Corps, the southern half of RVN, <sup>36.</sup>

The employment of air in support of ground operations followed a consistent pattern throughout the period. US Army craft were used to lift troops to battle areas in armed UH-1B's and to escort them with armed AH-1B's which provided close support. Army sorties averaged more than 6,000 a week. Army air was directed through the Army Air Request Net (AARN). The USAF and VNAF provided close support to ground units on requests processed through the Tactical Air Control System. All three units flew transport, recon, and liaison sorties.

One of the first major "search and clear" operations in 1964 employed all military elements in Vietnam. This was Operation Phuong Hoang I in the Thanh Phu district of Kien Hoa Province where the VC were located

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in strength. A prisoner of war, captured on 2 January said that he had just completed a four month's training course in the VC's Thanh Phu base area. This area was long recognized as the location of VC training and medical facilities, workshops, and the political cadre of Kien Hoa province. No RVNAF operations had been conducted in that area for over two years. Accordingly, plans were made for a joint search and clear operation using ground, air and water forces. These were made 16 January at the Joint General Staff (JGS) headquarters with representatives from all services attending.  
 37.

On 17 January at 0700 hours air strikes from T-28's and B-26's at Bien Hoa were made on the landing zone along with artillery fire. An hour later, the 1st and 4th Marine Battalions, moved by helicopter and amphibious craft into the northern part of the operational area which was about eight kilometers east of Thanh Phu. At 1100 hours, movement into the southern part of Thanh Phu district began with the simultaneous movement of the 3/10th Regiment by helicopter and amphibious craft to prepared landing zones. The 1/12th Regiment was dropped down in its area at 1130 hours and at 1300 hours, a 4.2 mortar platoon was heliborne to a civil guard post in the area. The 41st Ranger Battalion consisting of two companies was prevented from landing in its area because of intense VC ground fire but it was put on the ground by 1640 hours, where it was almost immediately engaged by the VC. This completed the encirclement of the zone and by 2200 hours that night all movement had ceased and troops dug in for the night. In the Ranger Battalion lifts, one armed UH-1B helicopter was hit by VC ground fire and destroyed in the air, killing the four US and one ARVN man aboard. A  
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 CH-21 troop carrier was hit on the ground with one US man wounded.

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The next day, 18 January, the operation continued with the further helicopter lifting of the 7th Recon Company and one company of the 2/13th Regiment to the operational area. In this latter movement, one armed UH-1B, supporting the operation, was hit by VC ground fire, plunging into the water with four US crewmen, one ARVN crewman, and an RAF observer aboard. Only two US crewmen were rescued. 39.

Air strikes were called at mid-afternoon on the 18th after the 2/13th was engaged by two entrenched companies while moving north. The VC broke contact after dark, carrying with them according to villagers, 30 hammocks of dead plus numerous wounded. Participating troops carried out their search and clear operations in the area but the VC avoided contact except for small actions.

By 19 January, the VC had lost 46 killed, 97 captured, three 60 mm mortars, 11 sub-machine guns, and other ammo. Also destroyed were six junks, two workshops, one training center, a 20 bed hospital, and about four tons of rice. Friendly losses were 20 dead (including four US and one British), two US missing in action, 25 wounded, (including three US) and two UH-1B helicopters destroyed. 40.

The Phuong Hoang operation absorbed about half of the total strike missions carried out in the III Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) for the week of 8 to 15 January. Some 79 of the 159 strike missions in the III CTZ were in support of Phuong Hoang 1. Eight aircraft received battle damage but no personnel were hurt.

In the IV CTZ, which, with the III CTZ, was most active in terms of VC encounters, USAF and WAF strike aircraft supported ground operations which were increasing in number and intensity. In the 21st Division area, the USAF ALO reported that sector controlled operations had

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tripled during January. In the first two weeks of January, as many as seven of the nine battalions in the 21st Division were employed in the field, a marked improvement over past months when the number in the field was about two to four. Division ALO/FAC personnel participated in all heliborne assaults and as air liaison coordinators over all Eagle Flight operations. Tactical air power was employed in 17 operations in 21st Division area, including four Eagle Flights. In the 9th Division area of operations, 40 tactical air requests were carried out by VNAF/USAF aircraft.  
41.

In the II Corps area, there was some air activity, though not as much as in the southern portion of Vietnam. The 22d Division, which carried out a major operation during the month, Operation Binh Tri 1-64, and other smaller operations, submitted 38 requests for tactical air support during January, of which all were flown with the exception of a few hampered by bad weather in the target area. The 23rd Division had two battalion size operations during the month, Dan Thang 404/12 and Darlac 14/12, both of which failed to make any sort of contact with the VC. Twenty-six requests for tactical air support on 46 targets were made, of which most were flown. In the 25th Division area, no major operations requiring tactical air support were conducted, but 41 requests for tactical air support were submitted of which 19 were flown. On seven requests, weather kept fighters from their targets and another 19 requests were not flown because aircraft were not available.  
42.

In the I Corps Tactical Zone, where the ARVN 1st and 2d Division were located, eight battalion sized operations were conducted during January, two of which received air support. Ten air strikes were made by T-28's during the month resulting in 35 structures known to be damaged or destroyed.  
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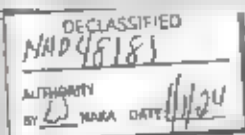
From the 1st to the 29th of January, throughout Vietnam, 1656 combat or combat advisory sorties were flown and 372 tons of ordnance were dropped.<sup>44.</sup>

Five USAF aircraft were lost during the month of January. On 7 January, a B-26 with a long record of "tuck-under" problems, crashed while on a test flight, with both the pilot and co-pilot killed. After bombing a VC installation in Zone D, another B-26 was hit by ground fire on 14 January and crashed in the area. The three man crew was killed. On the same day, a T-28, which incurred battle damage while attacking a VC installation, crash landed on return to base within 500 yards of the airfield with only slight injuries to the two man crew. On 21 January, a T-28 developed engine trouble when returning to Bien Hoa after a train escort mission and the crew bailed out safely, leaving the aircraft to crash. Investigation of this accident revealed that the fuel guage was inaccurate and the aircraft was out of fuel at the time it crashed. A C-47 crashed shortly after take-off from Tan Son Nhut airfield on 22 January, with only minor injuries to passengers and major damage to the airplane.<sup>45.</sup>

In the month of February, VC activity rose to the highest level since November, the month of the coup, and the number of VC-initiated incidents in February was the second highest on record although there was a sharp drop at the end of the month in conjunction with the TET holiday period. USAF air operations dropped after 16 February when the B-26's were grounded, although the T-28's continued flying. Total combat and combat advisory missions flown between 29 January and 26 February numbered 1345 with 333.9 tons of ordnance being dropped in that

\* See Chapter I, 2d AD Hist. Jan-June 1964, pp 45-51

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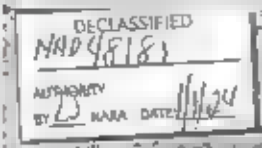
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period. As usual, most of the combat strikes were in III and IV Corps Tactical Zones. The RVNAF had 129 battalions available, of which 84 were being used in supporting or conducting offensive operations. The VC was showing signs of greater confidence and in one significant operation, on 6 February, they overran a strategic hamlet complex and defended it against ARVN relief operations until nightfall. This was variation of their usual tactic of dictating a "cease-fire" after such an operation which was actually, though unofficially, observed by ARVN forces.<sup>46.</sup>

One of the important joint operations of the month was Dan Chi 22 in Chuong Thien province in the IV CTZ which started on 14 February. The objective was to locate and destroy the Gia Rai Regional VC company which had an estimated strength of 90. The 21st Reconnaissance Company and the 361st Ranger Company were employed with backup by M113's and 105 howitzers. A US Army Eagle Flight was employed in this operation with six CH-21's of the 121st Aviation Company lifting the 21st Recon Co. into action and five armed UH-1B's providing support. The Ranger Company and the Armored Troop marched overland to the scene of action. While these units made no contact with the VC, their movement restricted VC escape routes after the heliborne force made contact. Two USAF T-28's were committed to provide air cover but they did not expend ordnance. The Eagle flights conducted two successful attacks within one hour and 45 minutes at a distance of more than five and half miles apart in terrain which presented difficulty to ground movements. Although only 12 VC were killed against one ARVN fatality, MACV considered this operation as illustrative of the "versatility of Eagle Flights operated in conjunction with ground units".<sup>47.</sup>

In the IV Corps area, where action was heavy during February,

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USAF and VNAF strike planes flew 624 sorties, of which 495 were by strike planes (B-26, T-28, and A-1H). In IV Corps, confirmed casualty figures showed 78 friendly personnel killed, 180 wounded and 23 missing against 290 VC killed and 87 captured. <sup>48.</sup>

The III Corps ALO, Lt. Col. David S. Mellish, reported in February that things were looking better for the use of air in his corps area with better teamwork between ARVN/US Army and VNAF/USAF. The new ASOC Director, a Capt. Trong, was said to have excellent working relations with key ARVN officers and an exceptional understanding of the nature of the war in Vietnam. "We still have a way to go", Colonel Mellish said, "but I feel more confident for the future than at anytime in the past ten months." One major problem in the area was that too small a percentage of requested strikes were being carried out. The ALO in Tay Ninh province, for example, reported that only 14 out of 67 requested targets in his area were struck, partly because the ARVN's 5th Division required that all air strikes pass through the Division except those responding to hamlets or units actually under attack. This included several requests which should have been classified as immediate requests. <sup>49.</sup>

In I Corps, adjacent to the North Vietnam border, there was an increase in ground operations but most of these were company size and relatively small in scope with poor results reported. Ten interdiction strikes were made by VNAF aircraft. In the first week of February, the 1st Division Commander, Colonel Phong, was relieved under very unusual circumstances. Although he was a favorite of General Tri, the former I Corps commander, Colonel Phong was reportedly relieved for trying to engineer a neutralist agreement for the 1st Division with North Vietnam. This was not confirmed, however. Colonel Phong was relieved following

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the 30 January Coup. In the 2d Division area, activity was more effective in terms of numbers of troops involved and results. Air support was limited to three of the six large ground operations conducted and only on standby status.<sup>50.</sup>

In the II Corps Tactical Zone, where three ARVN divisions were located, air activity fell considerably short of what was asked of it. In the 22d Division area, 14 out of 21 requests for tactical air support were flown, three not being honored due to non-availability of aircraft. The 23rd Division and the 47th Regiment submitted 29 requests for tactical air support of which eighteen were honored, five not being flown due to non-availability of aircraft. In the 25th Division, only 18 out of 69 requests for air support were flown. Of these, 36 could not be scheduled because no aircraft were available. The other requests were not honored because of weather, poor target information, or other reasons. In one major operation in the 23rd Division area, conducted between 10 and 25 February, two A-1H's were used effectively to prestrike the target zone prior to a heliborne landing, killing one of the four VC killed in the entire operation.<sup>51</sup>

Two USAF T-28's were lost to hostile action in February. On 18 February, at 1610 hours, a T-28 was hit by VC ground fire while on an interdiction mission and the plane crashed with both crew members escaping major injury. The following day, a T-28 was hit while making a strafing pass in support of a ground operation, with the pilot and co-pilot being killed as the plane crashed and exploded.<sup>52.</sup>

VC activities, which had dropped off during the TET holiday period, continued at a reduced tempo in the first weeks of March but RVNAF major ground operations in early March were on the average greater than for

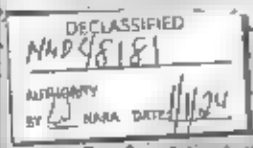
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the past three months. The USAF still had its B-26's grounded during March and its operations were limited, although action was under way to obtain T-28's on loan from the VNAP.

There were several joint operations conducted during March in which ground, air, and naval units worked closely together. In Operation Quyet Thang 12/64, a search and clear operation controlled by III Corps in Kien Prong province, air played an important role. The two day operation, which began on 2 March, had as its objective the location and destruction of the 502d VC Battalion, the Hong Ngu VC Company, and the 3/261st Company in the western edge of the Giong Bang secret VC zone in the 8th VC military region. ARVN units employed in the "search and clear" operation were the 1st and 8th Airborne Battalions, an M113 troop, a ranger company, and a battery of 155 howitzers. The 3/10th Regiment and a tank platoon were held in reserve. Air support consisted of eight A-1H's, two T-28's and four B-34's from VNAP with the USAF providing three C-123's and one C-47.<sup>53.</sup>

The combat units moved to the operational area by navy craft, landing on the east bank of the Mekong River at about 1930 hours on 2 March. After disembarking, the units moved eastward toward objectives near the Cambodian border. At 2200 hours, the first contact with the VC was made in which five of the enemy were killed. The ARVN units then moved by night toward their objectives. At first, the attacking units came under heavy fire from defensive positions in a heavy tree line and experienced heavy casualties as they advanced. Artillery was requested at 0700 hours on 3 March but was not delivered for one hour. The total action lasted two hours and the enemy broke contact and moved north.<sup>54.</sup>

After ground contact was broken, eight close air support sorties



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were flown by A-1H's and two by T-28's over an area east of the original battle position. These air attacks caught VC elements in the open and by pilot report, 85 VC's were killed. USAF aircraft were not employed because of the proximity of the Cambodian border. In their attacks, A-1H's and T-28's expended 2400 rounds of 20 mm ammo, eight napalm bombs and 96 one hundred pound GP bombs. In this operation, air action killed almost twice the number of VC killed by ground forces. A total of 130 VC's were reported as killed in action while friendly losses amounted to 15 killed, including a US Army captain, and 85 wounded in action. 55.

In another joint "search and clear" operation, air and ground units worked well together to exact a heavy toll of enemy killed. This was Operation Than Ngoc, which started on 6 March at 0700 hours and was completed the same day. The 2/14th Regiment, two civil guard companies, and the 359th Ranger Company were employed to locate and destroy the 509th Gang Long Regional VC Company and another reported VC concentration in Binh Vinh province. The US Army supported the operation with ten troop carrier helicopter, five armed escort AH-1B's, two U-1A resupply craft, and one UH-1B medical evacuation aircraft. The Navy provided three LCM's, two LCVP's, and two river patrol boats. VNAF contributed eight A-1H's and two T-28's to the operation while the USAF used three T-28's as support. 56.

At 0700 the 2/14 Regiment swept to the west to seize an objective in the vicinity of the village of Op That. The two civil guard companies moved south to seize a designated objective. By the time these units reached areas of likely contact, an "Eagle Flight" was airborne over the operational area with the 359th Ranger Company aboard. This Eagle Flight sighted a VC concentration near the objective of the Civil

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Guard and the five Hueys attacked at 1055 hours, killing 18 VC's. The VC were engaged again at 1135 by the Hueys and another ten were killed. 57.

Air cover was provided throughout the action by the eight VNAF A-1H's and two T-28's, which bombed VC installations in the area. These strikes were directed by the ALO of the 9th Division as the VNAF O-1A's which were to control the strikes, could not find the target. Five structures were destroyed and ten damaged as a result of these strikes. Naval elements of the 25th River Assault Group patrolled and blockaded the Hau-Giang branch of the Bassac River.

This operation, which resulted in 28 VC's killed, all by armed Hueys, and 33 captured, was said by MACV to "illustrate the effectiveness of Eagle Flights when conducted in conjunction with ground forces employed to restrict VC maneuver and escape routes, with the Navy properly deployed to secure the water routes and the Air Force providing overall air cover and close air support in restricting VC movement within and egress from the area". This constriction tended to force the VC to expose themselves, allowing friendly forces to seize the initiative and aggressively attack targets. 58.

In March, operations such as Than Ngoc were slowly being oriented to support of the Chien Thang Pacification Plan, the only war plan in being, but implementation of the plan was still not being carried out in earnest. The grounding of the B-26's reduced USAF participation in these operations and in support of installations under night attack. For example of the 33 strike sorties flown between 4-11 March in support of 21st and 22d Division areas in IV Corps, a USAF area of operations, 24 were flown by VNAF. The VNAF also provided the largest portion of flareships and fighters in support of night close air support requests. 59.

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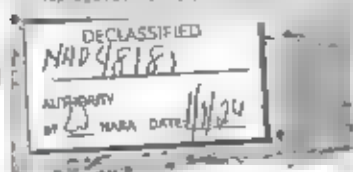
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In March, there was an increase in VNAF strikes, especially in III Corps Tactical Zone, where half of the total VC activity in Vietnam took place. This was partly due to the activation of the 518th Fighter Squadron which was organized on 10 March and flew its first combat missions on 18 March. The 518th was authorized 20 A-1H's of which it had seven in March. The other VNAF A-1H unit, the 514th Fighter Squadron, possessed 17 aircraft out of its authorized 20. Both squadrons were based at Bien Hoa where the 1st Air Commando Squadron (ACS) was located.

Changes were made in March to get greater utilization out of the VNAF capability in the critical III Corps area. In the past, aircraft were placed on ground alert to support small ground operations and at the end of the day, they were released to fly interdiction tasks. The III ASOC in March began placing a flight of fighters on airborne alert with ground alert back-up to cover several small operations. The fighters

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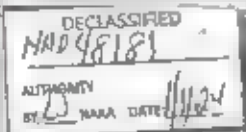
were scheduled for secondary interdiction targets. This resulted in a compression of reaction time and an increase in ordnance delivered on VC targets in relation to fighter missions flown.<sup>61.</sup>

In one air strike in the PBT Special Zone in III Corps made in response to an immediate request, T-28's which were already airborne were over the target in 20 minutes, resulting in a ground count of four VC killed and three VC wounded with a possibility of a larger count since the battle situation did not allow ARVN to inspect the whole area. The III Corps ALO Lt. Col. David S. Mellish, said the rapid response was possible because the aircraft were already airborne. In reporting this incident, Colonel Mellish said that ground alert posture was inadequate even to nearby places like the PBT Special Zone because "the VC melt away while the aircraft are being scrambled".<sup>62.</sup>

Colonel Mellish reported another case which occurred on 30 March when it took nearly two hours after the first request before aircraft were on target. The 35th Ranger Battalion was attacked by an estimated battalion of VC near An Nhan Tay in Binh Duong Province and requested air support around 0630. Not until 0830 hours were two A-1H strikes provided. However, the request was not received at ASOC until 0715 hours and the aircraft were off the ground 30 minutes later. The rest of the time, according to Colonel Mellish, "was flying time and coordination with FAC". This was not surprising, Colonel Mellish reported, since the average time from request in ASOC to "bombs on target" was normally one hour to one and a half hours, even to nearby targets.<sup>63.</sup>

An unfortunate incident occurred on 16 March when two VNAF A-1H's providing close support for the 42d Ranger Battalion which had been ambushed in Phong Dinh province, strafed friendly ARVN troops, killing

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one and severely wounding eight others. The aircraft were controlled by a FAC who had radio contact with the battalion command post which had assured him that the ambush area was cleared of friendlies. However, although ordered out, two ARVN companies were still there, not having been given sufficient time to comply with the order to move out. Another example of the impact of air power on VC morale occurred in the PBT Special Zone in III Corps where three VC defected in mid-March, saying that they were tired of being bombed. They said many of their VC compatriots would come in for the same reason except for fear of being tracked down and killed by the VC.<sup>65.</sup>

Major Edward M. Robinson III Corps AIO cited an incident which occurred on 11 March when a group of armed Hueys struck two locations in Dang Gia, one a VC radio station and the other a point from which the observing L-19 had received heavy ground fire and several hits. As it happened, the 1st Battalion of the 3rd Regiment was in the radio station area, not having reported their position for some time, a common failing among ARVN units. The Huey strike placed some rounds in the 1st Battalion's position without creating any casualties. As a result, the battalion refused to budge for three days, despite explicit orders to move along a planned route, pleading fear of armed helicopter strikes.<sup>66.</sup>

In the active III Corps area, the shortage of aircraft in March kept the number of air requests which were honored well below desired minimums. However, results of air strikes which were made were significant. In the Tay Ninh area, of 5th Division, 44 air strikes were made against 73 requests. Although results were difficult to obtain due to VC control of the strike area, Vietnamese intelligence reported six VC killed and four

\* See page 17 for further information on this subject.

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wounded in an air strike on 1 March and 36 VC killed and 42 wounded in a strike made on 7 March. In the 7th Division area of III Corps, 67 of 89 preplanned requests were filled while two immediate requests were both met and 23 out of 25 flareship requests were honored. As a result of air operations in 7th Division, 225 VC were killed and 27 wounded in action, along with numerous weapons, sampans, and structures destroyed. 67.

The III Corps ALO, Colonel Mellish, was concerned about the non-availability of aircraft in his corps. This lack of aircraft, he said, rapidly leads to lack of requests for air power. He added: 68.

...Much of the inclination to use VNAF airpower that our ALO/PAC's have slowly built over the past year is rapidly slipping away. As always, the Vietnamese ground commanders turn to the omnipresent U.S. Army Aviation whose comparative horde of aircraft fill every need that VNAF/USAF declines - with much less paperwork and argument for the Vietnamese commander to contend with in most instances.

On a typical administrative day... the US Army provides the following solely for the III Corps use: 17 Utility HU-1B, 11 armed reconnaissance HU-1B, two Caribou transports, four Otter utility transports, two Mohawk armed reconnaissance, and eight F-119 liaison aircraft. These aircraft fly an average of six sorties daily for an average of 275 sorties. When air support assault or heliborne operations are in progress, the above is augmented by 15 to 30 additional H-21 and AH-1B helicopters. A busy operations day will approach the 400 mark on sorties in III Corps alone.

...We (USAF/VNAF) currently fly 30 sorties of all types in III Corps even on busy operations days...

In the IV Corps area, the other area where most of the USAF/VNAF activity took place, 134 out of 200 air strike requests were filled in

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March. In ground activity in IV Corps during March, the 9th and 21st Division carried out 38 major unit operations with 20 making contact with the VC while only 107 out of 3422 small unit operations made contact.

The IV Corps, according to Lt. Col. Milton R. Pierce, the USAF's ALO, had drastically revised its basic method of operation, with a decline in giant heliborne assaults and an increase in smaller unit operations where a small force of troops would walk in and out of an area. Even though the number of small unit operations making contact appeared insignificant, it was felt that the constant harassment by small units in many areas on a simultaneous basis, served to minimize the number of large VC attacks on RVN fixed positions. Also, in IV Corps, there continued to exist a "free bombing area" complete with some specific coordinates and times for best possible results. These served as a relief to fighters returning from escort duty which had not yet expended, especially for VNAF aircraft as they were not hamstrung by the requirement for a FAC to mark the "free area".<sup>69.</sup>

Problems of aircraft shortages also made an appearance in I and II Corps. Although activity in I Corps was rather limited in March, in II Corps, non-availability of aircraft was responsible for several requests not being met. In the 22d Division area, for example, out of 40 requests submitted by Division to the Corps, only 13 were flown as requested with non-availability of aircraft being the reason for 13 missions not flown.<sup>70.</sup>

For the first time, T-28's in the 25th Division area of II Corps started using napalm, the first drops being made on 18 March. These resulted in the destruction of numerous VC building built-up during the wet season. On nearly every napalm drop, the FAC team observed improper delivery technique, with drops made at too high an altitude or in dive

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bombing. Most of the targets were area type requiring wide napalm coverage and the effect would have been greatest if delivery were low and fast. Since nearly all the targets were on level or sloping terrain, the proper technique could have been used. Lt. Col. K.L. Collings, the 2d AD ALC in II Corps recommended that VNAF fighter crews be re-briefed on the use of napalm for greatest results.<sup>71.</sup>

In II Corps during March, all regimental commanders were being visited by the joint US Army-USAF/PAC team on the use of on-call air and the importance of early requests, and on immediate air strikes. As a result of these briefings, the use of immediate strikes increased during the month, accounting for all the VC killed in the 25th Division area.<sup>72.</sup>

Throughout the III and IV Corps area where USAF strike activity was centered, there was still a considerable amount of USAF activity. In fact, despite the grounding of the B-26's which continued into March, there was, in the middle of the month, an increase in the overall number of USAF strike tasks supporting designated operations in III and IV Corps.<sup>73.</sup>

There were two major aircraft accidents in March, one involving a T-28 and the other an O-1F. The T-28 crashed while performing a bomb run near Soc Trang when the right wing separated from the aircraft, an incident similar to an accident which occurred in October 1963 at Da Nang. The O-1F was lost on 27 March, with the cause unknown and the airframe never located.<sup>74.</sup>

One particularly interesting VNAF operation conducted in I Corps, adjacent to the North Vietnamese border, on 30 March was dubbed the "VNAF Schweinfurt Raid" by US advisory personnel. This was large scale



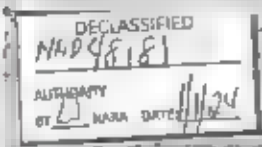
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night bombing mission, something unusual for the Vietnamese. It was planned in great secrecy by the newly formed VNAF 41st Tactical Wing at Da Nang and was not coordinated with the ARVN's 1st Division, whose area included the target. In fact, not until the VNAF decided that white phosphorus (WP) bombs were needed were the American advisors let in on the plan. These bombs had to come from the 2d AD, which denied I ASOC requests for them on grounds that the MACAF directive prohibited loan of USAF ordnance to VNAF when that loan could not be repaid with a like item. VNAF had no WP ordnance. It was the opinion of 2d AD that while the USAF was pleased to see the VNAF try something new, the effectiveness of the scheduled mission was considered doubtful. It was felt that the VNAF could not expect to get many bombs in the target area with level night bombing from 8,000 feet without a bombsight or some more sophisticated method of navigation than time/distance. The only real results obtainable would be harassment of the VC on a night mission and possible location and destruction of interdiction type targets on the follow-up daylight mission. Finally, after the US Senior Army Advisor of I Corps went to MACV, requesting 20 of the bombs, they were released by 2d AD.<sup>75.</sup>

The concept of the mission was to fly a night time/distance navigation course at a level 8,000 foot altitude with 12 T-28's and as many A-1H's as could be deployed to Da Nang in time, with bomb release to be made on the formation leader at the termination of the navigation time limit (9½ minutes after the identification point). The target area was reported to be a "VC training area and supply point". A follow-up daylight mission was to be flown at first-light the next day employing the same aircraft. There was to be no follow-up ground operation.<sup>76.</sup>

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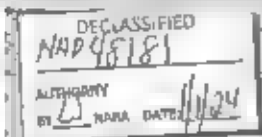
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The mission, involving 12 T-28's and four A-1H's, got under way at 0400 hours on 30 March, with VNAF Commander Colonel Ky and other high ranking ARVN-VNAF officers going along to watch the show. Because of the attendant publicity given this "new night bombing capability" of the VNAF, it was quite obvious that the mission had more political/propaganda significance than military effectiveness. Colonel Ky even rode in one of the T-28's during the attack.<sup>77</sup>

The results of the night mission were inconclusive. ARVN photo interpretation gave a glowing account of structures destroyed and damage inflicted on the VC. US Army photo interpreters were unable to determine the same results. As the post strike photos were taken after the follow-up daylight attack, it was difficult to determine what had been accomplished at night. The follow-up daylight attack was reported as quite successful by VNAF and T-28 pilots reported sighting and destroying a concentration of approximately 40 VC's on a river bank in the target area. This was also unconfirmed by Americans operating as FAC's in the area, although one FAC reported that the T-28's destroyed several structures.<sup>78</sup>

The US Army "Eagle Flight" concept was introduced into I Corps in March. Although at a meeting held on 13 March with US Marines, US Army, ARVN, and USAF personnel attending, it was decided that the use of armed Hueys conflicted with the rules of engagement, two Eagle Flight operations were carried out with armed Hueys in support. One was conducted on 23 March and the other on 31 March. The USAF ALO at I Corps, Lt. Col. Bill A. Montgomery, commented that since the US Army had recently lost two armed HU-1B's on these "Eagle Flights" that they would soon be discarded in I Corps.<sup>79</sup>

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The pattern of operations in April was much the same as in previous months. In I and II corps, where mainly interdiction missions were flown, VNAF T-28's were used while in III and IV Corps, where air activity took the form of close air support and air cover to ground operations, USAF T-28's supplemented the VNAF A-1H strength. Joint operations planning was starting to take on a professionalism that did not exist before. More efforts were made to use all services to anticipate and plan for the sealing off of VC escape routes.

USAF strike aircraft strength in April was at its lowest in two years, at one time, dropping to eight serviceable T-28's. The B/RB-26's were flown out of RVN to Clark Air Base on 1 April for salvage. However, by 1 May, the strength of the 1st ACS was raised to 19 T-28's after borrowing nine T-28's from VNAF.

In early April, there was a rise in the number of joint operations in the number making contact, and in the number of ARVN major night operations, all part of the increasing emphasis being given to pacification plans. However, there was also a sharp increase in the rate of VC incidents with the number of armed attacks about 75% higher in the second week of April than in the last week of March. Attacks of two battalion size and four company size were noted. The number of VC attacks in the week of 5-11 April was greater than those made in the entire month of March. The increase was felt to be the direct reaction of the VC to more energetic attempts by the ARVN to regain control of certain areas. MACV reported that the VC were no longer trying to sell the "Southern Liberation Front" but had begun using the "mailed fist in the velvet glove" technique. The VC seemed to be assuming more and more the aspects and functions of a de facto government.

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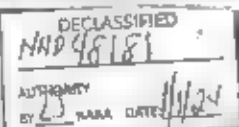
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Another Cambodian border incident occurred on 7 April when two A-1H's received ground fire from a Cambodian Army post near Ben Dinh outpost in RVN. The pilots were supporting the outpost which was under attack and

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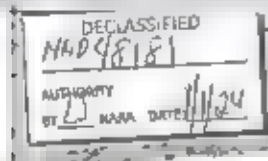
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denied violating the border which was 1500 meters away. Ten minutes after the A-1H's departed, ground personnel reported that four MIG-17's briefly penetrated the air space of RVN and returned to Cambodia.<sup>84.</sup>

In the middle of April, activity by the VC was greatly intensified and so was the RVNAF reaction. In terms of personnel losses, the week of 11-19 April was the most significant of the year, with the scene of heaviest fighting shifting to IV Corps. In one reaction to a VC attack against a district seat in southern Chuong Thien, the RVNAF found the VC in the field and ready to do battle in what was probably the greatest strength since the campaign to cut to the sea in Quang Ngai a year earlier. RVNAF reaction was strong including the first sizeable paradrop since November 1963 but the VC, thanks to the proximity of a major base, demonstrated considerable staying power and the ability to use mortars on a sustained basis. This engagement and the threat of stronger attacks was felt to open the way to VC bids to eliminate GVN influence in the southern half of the province. In overrunning the outpost of Kien Long, the District Chief, his deputy, and their families were killed. Air strikes by A-1H's supported the ARVN reaction and one bomb landed directly on a 105 mm howitzer position which the VC had captured.<sup>85.</sup>

In the last two weeks of April, there was heightened activity, both by the VC and Vietnam government forces. The VNAF carried the bulk of the strike load due to the non-availability of USAF aircraft and most activity continued to be in III and IV Corps. In two large scale operations conducted in IV Corps, VNAF, USAF, and Army aircraft supported over 100 close air support tasks. There was an increase in night missions in support of outposts under attack with the USAF and WAF sharing the flare support missions with C-123's and C-47's

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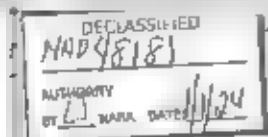
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respectively, and VNAF flying most of the close air support missions. The week of 11-19 April was a bad week for the US Army which had 16 of its aircraft hit, five of its people killed and 15 wounded while carrying out 5721 sorties. The VC were apparently intensifying their activity in conjunction with the SEATO conference taking place in the same period. In the week of 11-19 April, the RVNAF suffered 1005 casualties, including 200 killed, 658 wounded, and 147 missing or captured. VC losses were 660 killed and 53 captured. So far these were the highest weekly casualties for the year. The RVNAF lost 354<sup>86</sup> weapons in this one week period against 114 taken from the VC.

One bright spot in the pacification program was the apparent success of Dan Chien 1, a clear and hold campaign started on 16 February in I Corps which made considerable use of air support. The objective of this operation was to consolidate the area of the coastal plain and extend government control westward through the foothills to the Tranh River, destroying the VC infra-structure and attriting enemy units in the process. VC units in the area included a regimental headquarters with support companies and two battalions for an overall strength of 1100 people. In addition, the Chu Thang Main Force Battalion was in the area along with three companies and a platoon of local VC forces numbering 240 people.<sup>87</sup>

Two ARVN battle groups, each built around an infantry regiment with supporting troops and an artillery battery each, divided the area west of the coastal plain in I Corps into two main operational zones. Both employed area saturation tactics very effectively, with the VNAF flying interdiction missions. Each battalion was assigned an area and companies were given area of responsibility in the battalion area. From the company

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area, numerous patrols searched the area along pre-selected patrol routes. Artillery fire was placed in unoccupied areas between the patrol routes to harass the VC and force them into contact with the ARVN units. When an area was thoroughly searched, companies moved to adjacent area and repeated the process. In turn battalions moved to new zones when their area was cleared, a process that took about three weeks. The operation proved conclusively, according to MACV, that the VC were unable to cope with operations of extended duration when keynoted by constant patrolling, since such tactics inhibited their movement and resupply. <sup>88.</sup>

In the I Corps area, four A-1H's were deployed by USAF in April to Da Nang to support ground operations and augment the 516th Fighter Squadron. The 516th had been reduced in strength due to the transfer of eight T-28's to the 1st Air Commando Squadron. <sup>89.</sup>

Air activity by the US Army was heavy during the latter part of April, with 5374 sorties being flown in the seven day period between 18-25 April. On 24 April, the VC fired on a Caribou which was carrying the Deputy COMUSMACV, General Westmoreland, as it was parked on the Ashau air strip in western Thua Thien. The pilot, co-pilot, a US passenger, and two ARVN passengers were wounded, but the crew managed to fly the plane safely back to Da Nang. <sup>90.</sup>

Another T-28 was lost on 9 April when it crashed during a strafing run while undergoing heavy enemy ground fire. The left wing appeared to separate near the fuselage before the plane crashed. The aircraft was completely destroyed and both crew members were killed. <sup>91.</sup>

\* The US Army credited each landing and take-off as a sortie. If a Huey carried troops to an area, dropped them off and returned to base, this was credited as two sorties. Also, a US Army sortie could well be a 10 or 15 minute flight, for example, a flight from TSN to Bien Hoa

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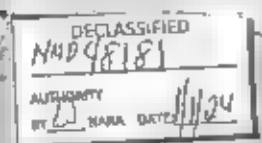
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The movement of the second battle group was to be carried out at 0930 on the 27th by USMC UH-34 helicopters but the initial aircraft had to return without landing troops because the extensive pre-strike carried out by VNAF A-1H's on the landing zones failed to neutralize the several well-emplaced .30 and .50 caliber machine guns. Additional VNAF A-1H's were called in for intense bombing and rocket strikes. Four of these A-1H's were hit and one so badly damaged that the pilot had to crash land at Thun Hoa airfield, demolishing the plane, but leaving him only slightly injured. After this second strike the Marine helicopters made the assault landings. Several of the UH-34's were hit and one forced down, destroying the aircraft with no crew casualties. A VNAF CH-34 helicopter was also downed in this movement with the aircraft being destroyed.  
95.

On 28 April, the second day of the operation, the 5th Airborne Battalion, which was in reserve, was moved by 27 UH-1B helicopters with 14 AH-1B's escorting into Zone "B" to reinforce units already there. As the reinforced units moved into VC positions on the fourth day of the operation, VNAF A-1H and T-28 aircraft provided close support. A USMC UH-34 helicopter had power failure and crashed on the fourth day, with no crew casualties.  
96.

A new tactic employed in this operation was a deception maneuver conducted to deter VC forces in the south from moving into the operational zone. On 28 April, eight A-1H aircraft strafed and bombed an area south of the landing zone and two C-47's dropped about 40 dummy paratroopers. This deception lost some of its effect because of the high altitude of the drop, strong winds, and inadequately weighted chutes. However, this deception plan plus the coordination of Quyet Thanh 202

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with a related operation Lam Son was believed by MACV to indicate a "developing competence in planning and conduct of joint operations".<sup>97.</sup>

USAF air activity in the first week of May rose sharply with air strikes in IV Corps more than doubling. This was the result of the borrowing of nine T-28's from VNAF which brought the 1st ACS strength up to 19 on 2 May. The night combat capability was enhanced by two EA-1F's (A-1H's with two seats, radar, and four 20 mm cannons) operating in an air defense role under the TACS. The crews of these aircraft were specially trained for intercepting low and slow flying aircraft at night. One aircraft was placed on five minute alert and the other on one hour alert from sunset to sunrise.<sup>98.</sup>

The tempo of ground operations remained relatively heavy in early May. RVNAF ground operations using forces of three rifle companies or more were 65 during the first of May, with 28 of these resulting in VC contact. Small unit actions were up from April, totalling 5357 the first week of May with 69 making contact. VNAF activity was down and the command took advantage of this to qualify T-28 pilots in A-1H's. Of 56 A-1H's in the country on 9 May, only 40 were operational due to a pilot shortage.<sup>99.</sup>

In May, there were several incidents near the Cambodia border involving both air and ground operations. The most significant was a crossing of the Cambodian border by an ARVN M113 Troop on 7 and 8 May. As part of Operation Binh Minh 23 which used two battalions and a special forces company supported by M113's and 195 howitzers. The M113 troop on the afternoon of 7 May contacted 100 VC's and pursued them as they retreated toward Cambodia. In the chase, the troop killed 30 VC's and captured 13, including some Cambodians. The Cambodian Government claimed

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that 13 ARVN vehicles penetrated two and a half kilometers into Cambodia and fired on inhabitants, killing six. The US Army military attache at Phnom Penh visited the scene with the press and saw the six dead in the Cambodia area. The next day, in another VC contact, ARVN M113's crossed the border in pursuit and engaged Cambodian Army AM M8's (French WW II wheeled vehicles armed with a 37 mm cannon and a .50 cal machine gun). One ARVN M113 was hit and burned and exploded 700 meters inside the Cambodian border but not before the ARVN had taken a heavy toll of VC casualties.

The VNAF during May, having received its A-1H's for its third squadron, was busy qualifying T-28 pilots in the new aircraft during the month and its combat operations were down from April. Eight VNAF A1O's were moved to ground units in the III Corps area during May in a move which would further help to compress reaction time for immediate air requests.

US Army and US Marine air activity was heavy particularly in support of Quyet Thanh 202 which began on 27 April and continued into the first week of May. As of 4 May, in addition to the three helicopters destroyed, 16 UH-34's, 27 UH-1B's, and one CH-37 had been hit by ground fire. In addition, two Army Caribous were lost in the first week of May. One crashed after take-off from Tan Riep airstrip near My Tho on 5 May. Smoke was seen trailing from the left engine and the aircraft shortly afterwards burst into flames and crashed, killing the ten US personnel and five ARVN personnel aboard. The second crashed on 7 May during a landing at Phan Thiet with no crew losses but major damage occurring to the aircraft.

The level of VC activity continued high, up until the last week of

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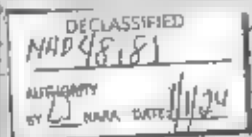
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May when it began to drop. Air was active in several major ground operations conducted by ARVN forces. On 14 May, where two ambushed Ranger companies lost 50 killed, USAF T-28's flew nine air strikes in the ambush area, creating heavy casualties and considerable confusion, according to an ARVN Ranger prisoner who later escaped. Two A-1H's made heavy pre-strikes in support of Operation Thang Long 5 which had begun on 14 April paving the way for movements of ML13's and three battalions into VC-held areas. This operation was the first in which airborne controllers were used, one for air and one for amphibious units. The A-1H's accounted for 20 VC killed in this operation. Quyet Thanh 202 in II Corps Tactical Zone continued to draw heavily on air support. 103.

Quyet Thanh 202 which lasted one month saw the VNAF used effectively in keeping pressure on VC ground forces while ARVN units moved in a search and clear operation. Throughout the exercise, VNAF using A-1H's primarily, flew 177 tasks, the majority being air cover and close support. Pilot reports indicated 30 structures destroyed and 12 damaged, but most important, perhaps, VNAF pressure caused the VC Fifth Regional Headquarters and at least three VC radio stations to relocate. The operation also made heavy use of psywar aircraft and H-34's which flew medical evacuation missions and crop destruction sorties. The helicopters flew over Quang Ngai province broadcasting the Do Ia victory and also flew crop destruction spray missions which destroyed a total of 122 hectares. Unfortunately, when the operation terminated on 27 May, it was not possible to leave behind three CIDG strike companies which were planned to stay and patrol the area after it had been cleared. Instead, anti-personnel mines were left behind to inhibit use as a VC base. 104.

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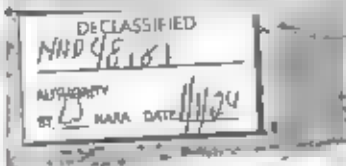
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In the overall operation 62 VCs were killed, 17 personnel captured, 185 structures destroyed, 122 hectares of crops destroyed, and 217 Montagnard families returned to government control. Four machine guns, four automatic rifles, and 65 individual weapons were captured. Friendly losses for the operation were 23 killed, 87 wounded, six aircraft destroyed (one A-1H, two UH-1B's, two UH-34's, and one TO-1D) and three M-1 rifles lost.<sup>105.</sup>

Two air incidents involving Cambodian aircraft were experienced during May. On 12 May at 0905, two MIG type jets penetrated RVN airspace at an altitude of 2,000 feet near Ben Cau and then returned to Cambodia. On the same day, a C-123 returning from Bangkok was intercepted by unknown fighters about 30 miles off Kae Kong Island on the Cambodian coast. The single engine conventional fighters escorted the C-123 for approximately 130 nautical miles to the southeast at an altitude of 7,500 feet.<sup>106.</sup>

While VC casualties were especially heavy during May, the overall pacification program was making little progress, particularly in the delta region and the critical provinces in the III Corps area. There was a deterioration in the GVN control of hamlets and the construction of hamlets. While in November 1963, there were 8,544 hamlets in existence and 1,051 under construction, in May 1964, the government held only 6,562 constructed hamlets and was building 782. Only 55% of the population of Vietnam was reported as being in hamlets constructed or under construction in May 1964, compared to 85% in November 1963.<sup>107.</sup>

Another T-28 was lost by the USAF during May. The aircraft had a power loss on take-off from Bien Hoa on 1 May and crashed and burned. Although the aircraft was completely destroyed, the crew got out before the airplane started burning. Other T-28's had experienced power loss



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in take-offs, but it was found that applying carburetor heat could correct this condition, so this was made a part of normal take-off procedures.<sup>108.</sup>

While most of the activity on both air and ground was in the southern III and IV Corps areas, there was an increase in air activity in the northernmost I Corps during May. In one mission in support of the 1st Division on 30 May, 15 VC's on a raft were hit by two A-1H's only 40 minutes after they were sighted by the 1st Division FAC, and it was believed that all 15 were killed. This response time was felt by the I Corps ALO, Lt. Col. Bill A. Montgomery, to be "most encouraging" and a demonstration that the WNAF had a capability for quick reaction whenever they had a good target.<sup>109.</sup>

Also in the I Corps area, the USAF in the last week of May, flew eight defoliation missions with C-123's staging out of Da Nang to clear parts of the Ashau Aloui Valley where the elephant grass and marsh scrub was so thick that the VC could move at will. VNAF A-1H cover for the defoliation mission was considered barely satisfactory as the A-1H's were consistently late, delaying operations. Also, on troop and cargo re-supply flights to airfields in the valley by C-123's and Army CV-2 Caribous, the A-1H's would depart the area prior to completion of the re-supply airlifts. At the daily air planning conferences, the WNAF's 1st Tactical Wing showed great reluctance to provide air cover and insisted that their planes could not stay on station longer than an hour and forty-five minutes to two hours. C-123 resupply flights were restricted because of this.<sup>110.</sup>

In the 2d Division area of I Corps, air support continued in support of the ARVN which was conducting Dan Chien I and Dan Chien II,

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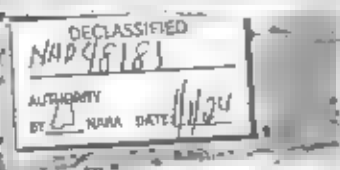
operations which had been in progress for the past three months. These operations employed the "area saturation" concept and excellent results were being attained. In May alone, 269 VC were killed, 43 captured and 53 defected in these two I Corps operations. ARVN losses in the same period were only 45 killed, 82 wounded, and two missing in action. The VC lost 92 weapons compared to 43 by the ARVN.

Perhaps the most significant operations by the USAF during May were the recon flights over Laos as part of the "Yankee Team" effort. These operations, which began on 18 May, are discussed elsewhere in this history.

Throughout June, the nationwide pacification efforts moved at a snail's pace, leaving much to be desired. There was a violent VC reaction to pacification efforts which slowed progress and which showed that the VC intended to make a concerted effort to halt the pacification program. In areas where the government was conducting pacification operations such as Quang Tin and Binh Dinh provinces, there was a sharp increase in VC incidents. Successful VC ambushes were reported in several areas. The severity of the VC reaction caused a deceleration of the pacification program in about half of the critical provinces of Vietnam.

One major effort which showed little reward was Dan Chi 39, a search and clear operation in An Xuyen Province about 23 kilometers west of Thoi Binh. This operation, controlled by the 21st Division of IV Corps, employed two marine battalions and a ranger battalion supported by 105 howitzers with a ranger battalion in reserve. Back-up for the operation, which began at 0700 hours on 27 May, was provided by Navy patrol craft and landing craft, USAF T-28's and VNAF A-1H's.

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ARVN forces went by foot and landing craft to the area where the VC's U Minh Local Force battalion and the 306th and 70th local force battalions were located. In the march, 16 marines were wounded by VC pre-set grenades. Before reaching their objectives and returning to base on 5 June, the force had lost three killed, three missing and 25 wounded, killing five VC's, four on the last day. The air strikes by the T-28's killed five VC's, as many as were killed by the three battalions in the 10 day operation.<sup>112.</sup>

For the Air Force, June was a significant month in that its newly arrived A-1E fighters were put into action. Starting on 1 June, the A-1E's averaged about eight sorties a day, accounting for a large increase in the amount of ordnance delivered on targets in June. There was a renewed emphasis placed on interdiction missions and the number of free strike zones approved for USAF use in both III and IV Corps had greatly increased.<sup>113.</sup>

In another test of its Eagle Flight concept carried out on 18 June, the US Army reported successful results. This was Dan Chi 41, a search and clear operation near Ca Mau City in IV Corps with the mission of destroying three local force VC companies, totalling about 250 men. Three ARVN battalions, a ranger company, and supporting M113's and 105 howitzers were employed. The plan of maneuver called for the battalions to close in on the VC area setting up blocking positions with the help of patrolling Navy craft on the river. And Eagle Flight, consisting of nine UH-1B helicopters supported by five AH-1B's and carrying the 21st Recon Company, would be aloft to strike any VC concentration. USAF T-28's and VNAF A-1H's would provide air support.<sup>114.</sup>

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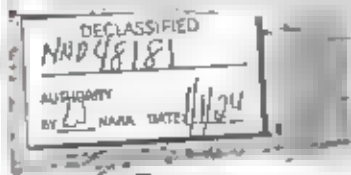
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In this operation, the major contact of the whole action came when the Eagle Flight sighted a VC concentration about five kilometers from one of the attacking ground units. In a combination of fire from the helicopters and ground units and USAF and VNAF strike planes, 24 VC were killed.  
 115.

In June the pattern of joint operations was beginning to take shape but at the same time, it was apparent that the VC were taking more aggressive action to limit the effectiveness of government nationwide plans for pacification. A typical operation of the type which was emerging was a search and clear operation called Tang Long Hai Yen 79 started on 21 June at the intersection of the boundaries of Kien Tuong, Kien Phong and Dinh Tuong Provinces under control of the 7th Division. Its objectives was to locate and destroy an estimated 1000 VC in the 261st Main Force Battalion, a company from the 502d and 514th local force battalions, and two other local force companies. A VC workshop, a training center, and a district headquarters were believed to be in the area.  
 116.

The GVN concentrated the equivalent of an infantry division for this operation, using five infantry battalions, two airborne battalions, one regional force battalion and three M13 troops as the major maneuver elements. Support was by a battery of 105's and two platoons of 155 howitzers with a ranger battalion being held in reserve. The idea was to surround the VC area in a circle of about 15 kilometers in diameter with its center near the village of My Thien in Dinh Tuong Province. These forces would then conduct a coordinated attack toward the center of the circle. The US Army composite airmobile force consisting of 44 rotary wing and two fixed wing aircraft would provide troop lift and

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escort. The 21st River Assault Group of the Vietnamese Navy would provide naval support and A-1E's of the USAF and A-1H's of the VNAF would hit targets in front of the troops in the circle. 117.

The attack opened up with a tragedy when a flight of VNAF A-1H's shortly after H-Hour, 0630 hours on the 21st of June, mistakenly attacked elements of the 2d Battalion of the ARVN's 15th Infantry Regiment, killing four and wounding five. The A-1H strike was requested by the 7th Division Chief of Staff who was aware of the risks involved. The attack continued with the main ground action occurring on the first day in the northern part of the circle. The 3rd Airborne Battalion, after being helilifted into its attack position, moved out and at 1400 hours engaged the VC force which had entrenched in prepared positions. The 1st Airborne, directed to reinforce the 3rd Airborne, struck the same VC force, the 26st Main Force Battalion, in its right flank. The aggressiveness of the ARVN attack routed the VC's who lost 55 killed. The 1st and 3rd Airborne lost 16 killed and 64 wounded. Throughout the three day operation, USAF A-1E's and VNAF A-1H's flew close support, air cover, interdiction and night flare missions. Although this was a relatively successful operation with the kill ratio being three to one, the VC's losing a total of 99 killed against 33 ARVN killed, the enemy, true to form, managed to escape from the trap set around him. Somehow, as always, he managed to slip through even the most carefully laid traps. 118

The introduction of the A-1E's into operations resulted in a rather sharp increase in the number of combat air strikes, both interdiction and close air support, but these were still confined to the III and IV Corps areas in the south. 119.

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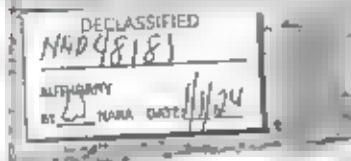
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The USAF lost another T-28 in June. On 26 June at 0822 hours, the aircraft, which had been escorting helicopters in Vinh Binh Province, was hit and the crew bailed out. One of the helicopters landed and recovered the crew members and the weapons from the crashed aircraft. The operation, in which the USAF and VNAF flew 33 sorties and killed seven VC, was a search and clear operation about 25 miles east of Can Tho in which 47 VC and 20 friendly troops (including two US officers) were killed. The two officers, (pilot and co-pilot of a helicopter) died when their plane was shot down, the same day the T-28 was downed. 120

Surveillance of Small Ship Traffic in South Vietnam

Late in 1963, night photo recon missions over the Camau Peninsula in the southernmost part of Vietnam revealed unusual shipping activity which backed up a prisoner of war report that the VC were moving supplies by sea into this area. To verify the existence of this shipping activity, 2d AD, in cooperation with the Vietnamese Navy, started airborne visual reconnaissance over the area to identify the direction and scope of all ships within 50 miles of the peninsula. Starting on 30 December 1963, four sorties a day by RB-26 aircraft were flown over a six day period, an early morning flight along the east and west coast and a late afternoon flight on the same routes. In the period between 30 December and 4 January 1964, 24 sorties averaging three hours flying time each were flown and a total of 4,038 vessels were sighted. The RB-26's flew at an average altitude of 5,000 feet, searching an area from the coast, seaward for 50 miles. Findings were immediately reported to the Navy which took action to identify the vessels. 121.

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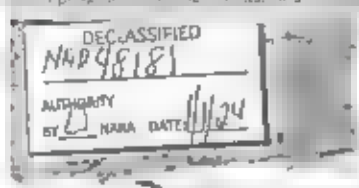
Based on these flights, the 2d AD concluded that the western coast of the Camau Peninsula extending from Rach Gia to the Cambodian border, appeared the most likely area for VC sea infiltration. The heavy magnitude of junk traffic noted in this area would allow the VC, disguised as fishermen, to move with relative impunity in this area. The nearness of the Cambodian border made it easy for the VC to move supplies and personnel by junks from Cambodian sanctuaries into the canal systems along the southwestern and western coastlines into the interior of South Vietnam.<sup>122.</sup>

As the recon effort revealed that the naval control of the area was not complete enough to stop Viet Cong shipment of supplies, measures were taken to tighten up control. A three mile restricted zone was created and a strict blockade of this area, which was along the extreme southern and southwestern delta coast, proved effective. There was a noticeable reduction of the coastal shipping. The 2d AD provided two recon planes for daily reconnaissance of the blockade area, using RB-26's at first and later RE-57's. A system of radio reporting was inaugurated between Navy patrol vessels and the patrolling aircraft so suspicious sightings could be quickly investigated.<sup>123.</sup>

In one of the recon flights, numerous fortifications were sighted along a seashore area in Kien Hoa Province. Photo back-up of the visual sighting confirmed extensive VC emplacements. An assault was carried out on these emplacements by elements of the Vietnamese Navy, Army, and Air Force.<sup>124.</sup>

On 15 April, this coastal surveillance effort, which at the time, was employing one RB-26 and two RB-57's, was officially ended and Detachment 1 was free to use all its aircraft on normal photo missions.

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"Yankee Team" Operations Over Laos

On 18 May, as communist Pathet Lao forces were overrunning the strategic Plain of Jars, the 2d AD, at the request of the Royal Lantian Government, launched RF-101 reconnaissance flights over the central and southern part of Laos. These first flight had political as well as military objectives. They were to "show the flag" and at the same time, gather intelligence data on communications lines, infiltration routes and troop movements and concentrations. Tan Son Nhut-based RF-101's of the 33rd Tactical Group were used on these missions. On the first day, RF-101's flew five low level photo recon missions without incident.<sup>125</sup>

On 21 May, the RF-101's were joined by RF-8's and RA-3B's of the Seventh Fleet. In the first few weeks of operations, with the AF flying between four to six sorties a day, the initial objectives were obtained.

On 6 June, a Navy RF-8 was shot down by Pathet Lao anti-aircraft fire and the following day, an F-8, flying as escort, was also shot down. USAF aircraft had never received any hits up to this time, although, on four occasions, they were fired upon. This was during missions flown on 29 May, 1 June, 3 June and 5 June.<sup>126</sup>

Following the shooting down of the two Navy airplanes, the USAF was directed to make F-100 strikes on Pathet Lao AA positions. On 9 June, eight F-100's from the 405th Tactical Fighter Wing based at Clark AFB, Philippines, flew to Da Nang, and from there launched attacks against

\* See Chap. I, Hist, 2d AD Jan-June 1964, pp 116-120 for political background to USAF recon flights over Laos.

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the AA positions. Expending 750 pound bombs, 2.75 inch rockets launched from LAU-3A's and 20 mm cannonfire, the F-100's inflicted heavy damage on the Pathet Lao positions. Napalm was not used on these strikes nor was it authorized. 127.

From 9 June onwards, recon flights continued, but every flight had F-100's flying escort. One of the photo recon flights on 9 June received flak fire. Following the 9 June F-100 strikes, Laotian Premier Souvanna Phouma asked that recon flights be stopped but he agreed to their resumption three days later. Between 9 and 14 June, no RF-101 flights were launched. Photo recon sorties were made on 14 June and again on 27 June without incident.

The F-100's which moved to Da Nang for the 9 June strikes remained on the base, rotating regularly from the parent base at Clark. These aircraft flew regular missions in support of RF-101 recon sorties which continued on a fairly regular basis after 1 July.

US Navy personnel from the Seventh Fleet joined the 2d AD Command Post in July to coordinate USAF and US Navy missions over Laos. The 2d AD Commander, Major General Joseph H. Moore, had the responsibility for final target assignments to both forces on missions over Laos, but liaison with the Navy was maintained.

With the resumption of regular missions in July, the 2d AD Command Post was getting periodic photo coverage of lines of communications, infiltration routes, and troop movements and concentrations in Laos, particularly in the Plain of Jars and the Panhandle area. An operations plan drafted by the 2d AD set up procedures for carrying out these missions. This called for F-100's to fly escort in pairs with two airborne spares in the air whenever possible. They made aerial

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rendezvous with the Tan Son Nhut-based KB-50J tankers and then joined the RF-101's for the missions over Laos. The F-100's carried two 335 gallon drop tanks, two LAU-3A rocket launchers, each capable of carrying nineteen 2.75 inch rockets, and a full load of 20 mm HEI/API. F-105's based at Korat, Thailand since the Tonkin Gulf incident also stood by to carry out SAR missions over Laos in case of an aircraft being downed. These F-105's could not be used for regular escort duties, however, even though they were much better situated for this task, because of a lack of Thai approval. F-105's were equipped with two 450 gallon tanks, one 650 gallon tank, two LAU-3A's and a full load of 20 mm HEI/API. 128.

On 28 July, one RF-101 and one F-100 received heavy anti-aircraft fire but no hits were made. On 31 July, an F-100 and a RF-101 received anti-aircraft fire and the RF-101 was hit. The F-100 made 21 passes at the AA site expending all its 2.75 inch rocket and 20 mm cannon ammunition. Again on 11 September, an F-100 expended its full load after an RF-101 was hit by ground fire. 129.

In a recap of "Yankee Team" operations from 18 May through 20 September 1964, the 2d AD reported that a total of 539 USAF and USN sorties had been flown over Laos. The AF flew 264 and the Navy 275. The AF flew 12 recon sorties, 94 escort sorties, and eight strike sorties. Flak was encountered 13 times and two RF-101's were hit. The Navy flew 99 recon sorties and 144 escort sorties, losing one F-8 and one F-8 to ground fire. 130.

The significance of "Yankee Team" operations lay in the precedent which they established. While their primary purpose was to help the Royal Laotian government in their fight against the Pathet Lao, the

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use of RVN-based jets to fly photo recon and strike missions against targets in Laos was a highly significant precedent. These low and medium level recon flights also were able to obtain recon coverage of Viet Cong movements through Laos into RVN.

#### Summary

This chapter has emphasized the combat air role of the USAF in the counterinsurgency struggle in Vietnam against the Viet Cong guerrillas. The performance of the B-26's and the T-28's which were replaced during the period by A-1E's was certainly impressive, particularly in terms of the numbers of Viet Cong killed. USAF air strikes accounted for 26% of the 7258 VC's claimed to have been killed between January and June 1964, this in a period of aircraft conversion. The USAF also provided practically all the air recon needs of the war. While it is difficult to determine the effect of these combat activities upon the overall progress of the pacification struggle, they certainly had military significance.

It would be wrong, however, to consider the Air Force role solely in terms of its strike and recon missions. The 315th Troop Carrier Group, flying 52 C-123's throughout the country on a variety of non-combat missions also played a significant role. Operations of the 315th are covered in the unit history. The non-combat aircraft of the 34th Tactical Group, O-1P's flying forward air control missions, and U-10's on psywar missions, also played an important part in the war. The 34th Tactical Group history gives details on these activities.

Also of significance, particularly in the long run, were the

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activities of the Air Force Advisory Group, which was the Air Force Section of the Military Assistance and Advisory Group before 15 May 1964 when the MAAG was eliminated. This unit was responsible for building the Vietnamese Air Force into an effective air organization which could eventually take over completely the air role in Vietnam. Headed by Brig. Gen. Robert R. Rowland, this organization was active throughout Vietnam in the WNAF training function. This unit will prepare a separate history covering the period 15 May 1964 to 31 December 1964.

In mid-1964, the USAF commitment in Vietnam was greater than ever and the war which it was fighting was becoming more intense and more widespread. There was certainly nothing in the first half of 1964 which could clearly point to victory. Two elements of the war, the growing strength of the Viet Cong, and the lack of a stable centralized government for the Republic of South Vietnam, made the future look more grim in mid 1964 than it did at the beginning of the year. On the brighter side, however, there were in the first half of 1964, under the command of Maj. Gen. Joseph H. Moore, very definite improvements in the Air Force organization and in its ability to merge its resources with the other elements involved in the counter-insurgency struggle. There was greater appreciation in the theater of the role of the fixed wing aircraft and a trend toward more and more joint operations involving Army, Air Force, and Navy elements. Army and Air Force units were also teaming up to assist reaction forces against the growing number of successful VC night attacks against outposts and ambushes of relief personnel. In effect, the growing strength of the Viet Cong, in numbers and in capability, and his potent AA capability against Army rotary craft was having the side effect of bringing the Army and Air Force to

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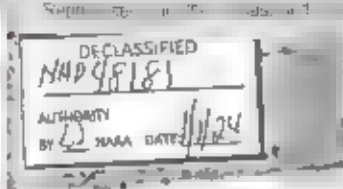
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greater cooperation in the use of all resources in the theater to best advantage for the tough struggle which lay ahead.

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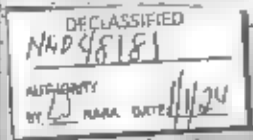


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G L O S S A R Y

A-1E	Two seated USN aircraft used by USAF in Vietnam
A-1H	One seated USN aircraft used by VNAF in Vietnam
AA	Anti-aircraft
AH-1B	Armed Helicopter used by USA in Vietnam
AARN	Army Air Request Net
ACS	Air Command Squadron
ADVON	Advance Echelon
ALO	Air Liaison Officer
ARVN	Army Republic Vietnam
B-26	light two engine bomber
BAR	Browning Automatic Rifle
C-47	light two engine aircraft, cargo
C-123	two engine aircraft, cargo
CH-21	Cargo Helicopter
CV-2	USA cargo aircraft
CIIG	Combat Irregular Defense Group
CTZ	Corps Tactical Zone
COMUSMACV	Commander US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
Conf.	Confidential
DFC	Distinguished Flying Cross
EA-1F	USN fighter
F-8	USN fighter
F-100	USAF jet fighter bomber
F-105	USAF jet fighter bomber
FAC	Forward Aircraft Control
GP	General Purpose
Gp	Group
GVN	Government Vietnam
H-34	general purpose helicopter
Hist.	History
JGS	Joint General Staff
LAU-3A	aircraft rocket launcher
LCVP	Landing Craft Vehicle, Personnel
MACV	Military Assistance Command Vietnam
MIG	Russian jet fighter
mm	millimeter
O-1F	Light Observation aircraft

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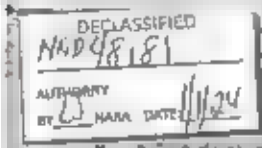


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PBT	Special Zone in Vietnam
PSP	Perforated Steel Planking
PW's	Prisoners of War
RA-3B	USN Recon aircraft
RB-26	USAF Recon bomber
RB-57	USAF Recon jet bomber
RF-8	USN Recon jet aircraft
RF-101	USAF Recon jet fighter
RVN	Republic Vietnam
RVNAF	Republic Vietnam Armed Forces
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
T-28	light Trainer used as a fighter/bomber in Vietnam
TAC	Tactical Air Control/Controller
TACS	Tactical Air Control System
TCG	Troop Carrier Group
TASS	Tactical Air Support Squadron
TO-1D	USA liaison aircraft
U-1A	troop carrier helicopter
UH-1B	Utility Helicopter
UH-3A	troop carrier helicopter
US	United States
USAF	United States Air Force
USMC	US Marine Corps
USN	US Navy
VC	Viet Cong
VNAF	Vietnamese Air Force
WP	White Phosphorus

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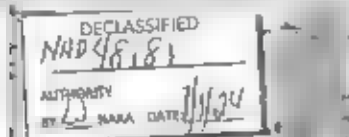
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5. General Anthis Speech, 4 February 1964, to the Command & Staff College.
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8. Chronological Summary of Air Force Casualties Incurred as a Result of Aircraft Accidents or Hostile Action During Period 1 Jan thru 30 June 1964. Prepared by Dir/Pers. Hq. 2d AD, Doc. 30, Chap. III
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30. Saigon Post, (Saigon), 23 June 1964, p-1.
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34. Figures extracted from MACV Weekly Military Report, J3 5781, 061053Z July 1964.
35. Conf. 2d AD Data, Commanders Data Book Presentation, prepared 27 July 1964, Doc. 19. This chart gives a complete summary of air responses to immediate and preplanned requests.

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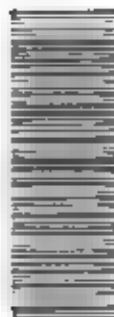
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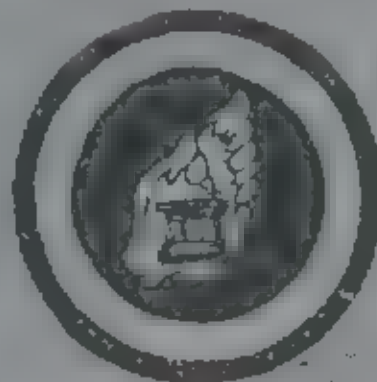


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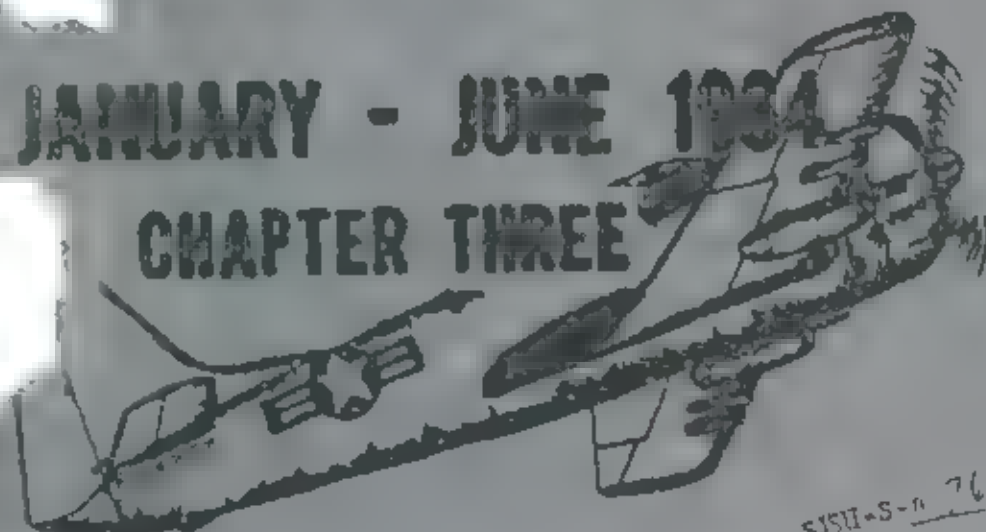
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**2<sup>ND</sup> AIR DIVISION**

# **HISTORY**

**JANUARY - JUNE 1964**  
**CHAPTER THREE**



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**"SUPPORT FOR USAF UNITS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA"**

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## History, 2d Air Division

January-June 1964

### Chapter III

#### Support for USAF units in Southeast Asia

Prepared by TSgt Robert A. Young  
Hq 2d Air Division,  
APO 307, U.S. Forces

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## FOREWORD

This chapter is the third of four portraying the role of the U.S. Air Force in the counterinsurgency effort in the Republic of Vietnam. It covers the support for USAF units in Southeast Asia including supply, maintenance, funding, civil engineering, personnel and communications to meet the ever changing needs of the counterinsurgency environment as well as the changing strategic pattern in explosive Southeast Asia.

Assisting the writer in preparation of this volume were Mr. Kenneth Sams, 2d Air Division historian who gave valuable technical advice and assistance and SSgt Frank A. Green who provided assistance in research and administration. The writer also wishes to thank representatives from the US Military Assistance Command, and personnel from 2d Air Division staff agencies who were most cooperative in providing necessary material.



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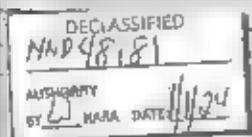
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## CHAPTER III

### SUPPORT FOR USAF UNITS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

#### Introduction

Although the support for U.S. Air Force agencies in SEA was not at its best in June 1964, the overall program had improved. Supply procedures had begun to show definite improvement even though the supply mission had almost doubled. Maintenance procedures had established set policies that improved O/R (Operational Ready) percentages for the assigned aircraft and increased the mission capability of the 2d Air Division operational fleet of tactical and transport aircraft.

With the implementation of Modified STAR (Speed Through Aerial Resupply) procedures within the supply system late in 1963 the aircraft spares supply pipeline began to move more rapidly. Many of the problems in the supply system were the result of added mission requirements. Slowly STAR procedures began to encompass the entire SEA Unit Mission Equipment (UME) posture, and at the end of June 1964 supplies began to pour into the Base Supply facility at Tan Son Nhut at a far more improved rate. The supply pipeline had been cut from an excess of 30 days on priority items down to 14-18 days which was considered enough to satisfy mission requirements.

In July 1963 the Base Supply at Tan Son Nhut had 10,000 line items in the inventory. By the end of June 1964 this had more than doubled, and was being operated completely by the manual system.

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The supply program increased steadily and became effective despite a minimum of personnel on hand to do the job.

Phase out of the B-26 and the T-28 aircraft eliminated the B-26 spare parts from the Tan Son Nhut Base Supply inventory but the T-28 equipment and spares were still being utilized by U.S. facilities in Thailand. The A-1E "Skyraider's" arrival brought 3,000 new line items into the system in May 1964, and the ASFD package was 97 per cent complete on arrival at Tan Son Nhut.

WRM was one of the more serious problems in SEA. The problems encountered were caused by lack of available storage space, requiring the bulk of the WRM to be stored at Clark AB in the Philippines. Plans were established by 2d Air Division for new WRM reporting procedures and the acquisition of storage space in Southeast Asia to eliminate Clark, along with new streamlined supply requisitioning procedures for WRM items.

Funding in SEA was a real clog in the supply pipeline. In early 1964 requisitioning was completely cut off because of "red tape" procedures which bound up 2d Air Division funds. With supply requisitioning at a stand still, bench stocks became depleted, and only high priority items were requisitioned. In May 1964 a joint meeting between 13th Air Force, 405th Fighter Wing and 2d Air Division released additional funds that were required for SEA with a guarantee of complete funding in the future. Slowly the supply system began to function again and the pipeline began to fill up and become normal.

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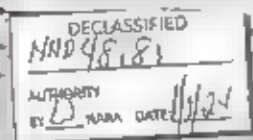
The condition of the vehicle transportation in SEA for Air Force units was unacceptable in early 1964. Vehicles were being brought into the system with 60,000 and 70,000 miles already recorded on speedometers. This gave the vehicle a short life expectancy in an extremely rugged terrain, such as found in Vietnam and Thailand. Procedures were brought about to halt the delivery of outdated vehicles into Vietnam and the eventual supply of like new vehicles, and new equipment built for use in terrain such as that in SEA.

In the last six months in 1963 and the first six months in 1964, aircraft maintenance in SEA saw the biggest and most complete changeover. O/R percentages were at a serious low point in early 1963, but with the implementation of APM 66-1 maintenance procedures and the organization of CAMRONS at all the major groups in South Vietnam, O/R rates began to climb and soon reached a suitable point high above average, with an increased mission and the introduction of completely new aircraft into the system.

The old reliable B-26 and the hard nose T-28 began to tire and were finally phased out of the SEA system due to structural failures. The A-1E was implemented into the system, changing maintenance procedures on fighter bomber aircraft overnight, but without a slow down in operational capabilities.

At first there were only three aircraft in the inventory, the T-28, B-26 and the C-123, but in 1964 there were eight different type aircraft permanently assigned requiring maintenance, along with a great number of transient aircraft ranging from the C-135

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Stratolifter to the latest in Century series fighters.

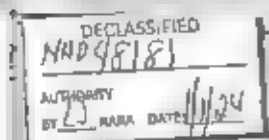
The old workhorse of the airlift capability of 2d Air Division, the C-123, continued to do its job with increased flying hours each month, in spite of a wing deficiency which developed when wrinkles were found in many of the fleet of 53 aircraft. The wing wrinkles were found in time to enable a complete overhaul of some aircraft and minor repair to others to keep the fleet completely operational.

Thirteen aircraft were lost from the inventory between 1 Jan and 30 Jun 1964, but not one crash resulted from poor maintenance. Five were lost as a direct result of hostile ground fire.

Civil Engineering played an important role in the success of the mission. Working constantly to operate an almost completely portable power plant with various sized generators, U.S. equipment was kept operational. Power plants were completed at Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa to supplement the serious shortage of electrical power and more power plants were scheduled for construction at all major U.S. bases in SVN and Thailand in September 1964. Construction continued at all U.S. facilities including the completion of the 2d Air Division headquarters building that was ready for operation in July 1964. At SEA U.S. installations, \$363,900.00 was spent on 47 projects to improve facilities under the Operational Maintenance Construction (O&M) program and another \$804,100.00 was spent on the regular Military Construction Program(MCP).

Although firefighting equipment was extremely short, resupply of vehicle spares was excellent and the fire fighting personnel strength was at a 100 per cent or better level.

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As in almost every case, personnel problems were among the largest. Some career fields were overmanned, others undermanned and the strength figures, which sometimes were far over authorized strength, still did not reveal 100 per cent manning.

A main factor was officer assignments within the theater. In January the Commander 2d Air Division could not reassign an officer within the command without prior approval of Hq USAF. This problem was eliminated with the implementation of project "Center Stage". Other problems were DEROS assignments for officers and airmen. Base of choice for officer personnel was often disregarded through all three choices, and many times airmen were required to remain in SEA far beyond their DEROS because of a lack of assignment in the CONUS. A lack of assignment required them to remain at their present assignment until receipt of same. This problem still existed in June 1964 to some degree. It was determined that such problems resulted in the eventual loss of many highly qualified personnel who either retired or left the service, with an "I don't care" attitude, or they had lost all respect for Air Force promises and procedures.

Another highly regarded problem was the quality control assignment of many career fields. One in particular was munitions handlers who arrived in SEA completely unaccustomed to aircraft and munitions being used or in one case had no conventional weapon training whatsoever, only nuclear. It was understood that procedures were being taken by PACAF to attempt to train these personnel prior to departure from CONUS as training in Vietnam is virtually impossible.

Reportedly poor in the past, the awards and decorations program

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in SEA was in high gear in June 1964. More awards were being processed than ever before and newer and more up to date procedures had been put into effect.

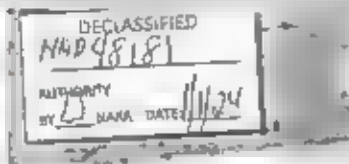
SEA was still a serious trouble spot. The mission continued to grow every day and mission support became increasingly important. Aircraft were flying more hours, more supplies were required to meet operational needs and more and more personnel were being brought into the theater. Although many problems still existed, mission support was on a definite upswing. New vehicles were programmed and more aircraft were arriving.

#### Supply Support in Southeast Asia

Supply support had been a major problem in Southeast Asia for U.S. Air Force organizations since the establishment of the 2d Air Division in 1962. Under the original concept set up by the Air Force all support to the 2d Air Division organizations throughout the theater was to have been furnished by Clark AB, <sup>1</sup> in the Philippine Islands. This was based on the limited part the United States was taking in the internal battles between Vietnamese and Vietnamese; Laotians and Laotians; and the political unrest in Thailand.

Because of the increased U.S. aid and support activities in SEA as a result of the continued communist aggression in South Vietnam and in Laos, which was far beyond the original concepts of operations, a serious deterioration of service took place. There was a heavy influx of personnel, aircraft and

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operational commitments in the area.

To officials assigned in Vietnam and Thailand in 1962, it rapidly became evident that the Base Supply agency at Clark was oversaturated and incapable of providing the required and necessary adequate support to Southeast Asia. This caused extreme hardships to units in South Vietnam, Laos and Thailand because of the valuable time consumed for double handling and reshipment of supplies added to the already unacceptable pipeline time from depots in the U.S.

In December 1962, PACAF reorganized the system establishing a program which would support the immediate need for a logistic support base in South Vietnam that could quickly expedite SEA logistical requirements, eliminating the double handling and delayed support resulting from Clark's oversaturated position. This reorganization resulted in the activation of FB 5269,<sup>2</sup> or Base Supply activity at Tan Son Nhut Air Base near Saigon, the capital city of South Vietnam, on 15 December 1962. At that time, the total number of supply personnel assigned to the Tan Son Nhut Base Supply was one officer, seventeen enlisted men and one local Vietnamese civilian employee. This strength was to remain the same with no programmed increase of personnel until April 1963.<sup>3</sup>

Many problems existed in the newly formed Base Supply function during early 1963. Operations were severely limited in the Vietnam supply agency due to austere manning, extremely limited receipt and storage facilities and the limited modern equipment for handling

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these supplies as they were brought into the country.<sup>4</sup> At that time, all supplies except priority items were being brought into the area by sea, with priority two equipment and supplies being airlifted from depots in the United States to South Vietnam.

With the increase in personnel, beginning in April 1963, the Base Supply at Tan Son Nhut grew rapidly. It was still growing 30 June 1964, far beyond the initially established concepts which were set down by PACAF in the reorganization program for SEA.<sup>5</sup>

Since December 1962, because of the large amount of support due at other stations, the supply function at Tan Son Nhut found it necessary to expand even further. An annex at Bien Hoa, some 24 miles north of Saigon, was established in early 1963 to support the large amount of activity at that station which housed almost every aircraft the U.S. had in Vietnam, except the C-123 which was assigned to Da Nang, and Tan Son Nhut. Personnel at the Bien Hoa annex were assigned there from the Main Base Supply at Tan Son Nhut<sup>6</sup> and remained under the supervision and control of the Base Supply system.

Of the many problems facing the Tan Son Nhut supply system in FY '64, funding was the biggest, and because of this situation procurement of bench stock spares for maintenance was hindered. In his end of tour report, Col. Harold E. Walker, Director<sup>7</sup> of Material, 2d Air Division said:

...Funding for FY'64 was totally unsatisfactory. In February it was nec-

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essary to restrict all requisitions to mission-essential items only, with resultant depletion of stocks, drying up of pipelines, and constant customer complaints. No relief was received until May, and full recovery is just now being effected. One-hundred per cent funding of SEA requirements is mandatory, with 2d Air Division being charged with responsibility to assure funds are adequately controlled. Constant revision of the budget, reflecting the constantly changing support requirements, cannot be avoided...

By July 1964 there were Mission Support Kits (MSK) stored at Tan Son Nhut as well as at Bien Hoa and Da Nang. These kits were being maintained by personnel from the Tan Son Nhut base function positioned at points where the MSK were stored.

The extensive growth of the supply system was evident when line items were compared from 1 January 1963 through 1 July 1964. In January 1963 there were approximately 1,000 accountable line items on hand at Tan Son Nhut and on 1 July 1963 this number had increased to 10,000 at a dollar value of approximately \$2,200,000.00.<sup>9</sup> By January 1964 the accountable line items had jumped to 18,257 at a cost value close to \$3,800,000.00. As of 1 July 1964, Base Supply had approximately 22,000 line items and the value had increased to more than \$4,300,000.00. This was being accomplished with 112 officers, airmen and local civilian nationals assigned. The entire supply function was being operated by these personnel without the benefit of a mechanized supply transaction system.

Initially the main Southeast Asia Base Supply function was supporting only three types of aircraft. The B-26, which phased

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out of the system on 1 April 1964, the T-28, which also had been phased out of action 30 June 1964 except in the Water Pump program in Thailand and assistance in Laos, and the three squadrons of C-123 "Providers" which were still flying an increased mission in July 1964.

On 30 June 1964 all of the aircraft used by the United States in SEA were supported by Base Supply, with the exception of the Able Mable (A/M) RF-101s<sup>11</sup> and Patricia Lynn RB-57s which were supported by Kadena AB and Clark AB respectively; and Lucky Dragon/Yankee Team aircraft which were supported by parent bases. Deployed units, which included the LD/YT aircraft (F-100s and F-102s) in addition to Able Mable and Patricia Lynn aircraft were supported by MSKs which the owning organizations deployed with the aircraft. All resupply of the MSK was done by the parent unit by air.

From the Base Supply function located at Tan Son Nhut, two Base Equipment Management Offices (BEMO) were established at Tan Son Nhut (33d Tac Gp) and at Don Muang, Thailand (35th Tac Gp). These BEMOs were supported directly from the main Base Supply function for Southeast Asia which was located at Tan Son Nhut. Also supported were all Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE) spares, ground POL, and a number of classified projects. The average monthly manual supply transactions at the end of June 1964 ran in excess of 20,000.<sup>12</sup> This figure included the pickup on 2 May 1964 of the new A-1E "Skyraider" support with the initial lay-in of spares completed as an ASFD package.

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 This package from SHAMA included spare parts and AGE to support the 30 A-1E aircraft programmed at that time and consisted of almost 3,000 line items. It was approximately 97 per cent complete on the initial delivery. Additional funds for supplies and equipment for the A-1E were made available by 13th Air Force. Immediate action was taken by all 2d Air Division units which were to support the A-1E to obtain required items for necessary support. 14  
 Practically all mission-essential items were able to be obtained.

With the addition of all line items and equipment necessary in Southeast Asia, a plan had to be developed to expedite priority items into the system. The pipeline program was still much too slow and the steady increase of supply requirements to support the aircraft and equipment in RVN and Thailand had to be improved. 15  
 Modified STAR procedures were introduced to SEA in mid-August 16  
 1963 in an effort to increase the pipeline time. Prior to July 1963 pipeline time for replacement supplies between the Base Supply at Tan Son Nhut and ZI depots were averaging over 30 days for priority two requisitions. Since the beginning of the modified STAR procedures, with the exception of December, the pipeline time dropped to a level in which priority two items arrived at a sufficient speed to support the assigned mission successfully.

The pipeline time set down by AFM 67-1 for normal overseas delivery time for priority items was 14 days, but Vietnam, being at the end of all pipelines running from the ZI, 14-18 days was

\*This problem has no recorded explanation.

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adequate to support the mission successfully. In comments concerning the institution of modified STAR procedures in the SEA supply system Col. Harold E. Walker, Director of Materiel, 2d Air Division stated:

...STAR procedures have been a life-saver in supply support to Southeast Asia. Pipeline time from CONUS has been reduced from more than thirty days to an average of approximately fifteen days over the past six months. STAR procedures must be maintained for the duration...

To assist the Tan Son Nhut Base Supply in the logistical support program in Vietnam, Brig Gen Vincent G. Huston, APLC, Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio sent the following quoted message to Maj. Gen. Lewis L. Mundell, Hq. PACAF on 31 March 1964:

...General Bradley and our staff have been increasingly concerned over the logistic support for USAF and Republic of Vietnam Forces. In view of the programmed arrival of new type aircraft into the theater and the increased emphasis placed on Vietnam operation it is important that nothing be overlooked to assure positive supply support to present and future forces. In view of this Col. Howell C. Widlke, directorate of operations, and Maj. Albert Jacobs are being dispatched to provide assistance in resolving any outstanding logistics problems with 2d Air Division staff. Major Jacobs is well known to you on past logistics problems in Vietnam...

Understanding the critical problem in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, the staffs at Air Force depots, realized the serious problems that would result in the failure to support the ever growing supply system required in the South Vietnam counterinsurgency operations.

In addition to the B-26, T-28, and C-123, on 12 March 1964 the

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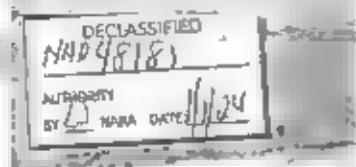
C/HV-47, HH-43, U-3, U-10 and O-1F aircraft were placed on STAR procedure priority lists adding to the ever mounting requirements<sup>19</sup> for support in Vietnam.

This came as a direct result of the O-1F problem which resulted in NORS and cannibalization rates for O-1F aircraft because of increased flying time, shortages of spares, and the age of the aircraft.<sup>20</sup> PACAF requested that AFIC place the O-1F aircraft under modified STAR procedures as were the C-123, T-28 and B-26 spares, to provide adequate, effective and timely spares support programs<sup>21</sup> to South Vietnam.

As a result of the phasing out of the B-26 and the T-28 in Vietnam, the Base Supply function was left with aircraft spares for these weapon systems. Closing out of the B-26 spares from the inventory was almost complete at the end of June 1964 and disposition of the T-28 spares was dependent upon the close-out date of the Water Pump project in Thailand which was still using the T-28 aircraft and being supported directly by Base Supply facilities at Tan Son Nhut.<sup>22</sup>

With the addition of new type aircraft, new spares and AGE equipment at all SEA bases, supply problems continued to exist. As previously indicated, the number of supply transactions that were required monthly was slowly building to a point where a manual system would certainly become overloaded and processing and pipeline items would again be severely disrupted. Said Col.<sup>23</sup> Harold E. Walker, Director of Material, 2d Air Division:

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...A full-blown Base Supply in SEA is desirable. However, I consider the cost and lead time to be prohibitive. I realize that all personnel are not in agreement with me, and I admit my knowledge of supply procedures is somewhat limited. Everyone is in agreement that we are near saturation of a manual account. The addition of support packages remaining at Clark Air Base (C&E, Motor Vehicle, Civil Engineer, Power Generation) would increase our line items and daily transactions between 25 per cent and 50 per cent, definitely more than the manual system can absorb...

At the end of June 1964, about 20,000 transactions were being accomplished by Base Supply personnel and would increase somewhere in the vicinity of 40,000 transactions, well over the capability of manual transactions in a Base Supply function. It would also increase the line item accountability to near 40,000. Col. Walker continued his evaluation of the existing and suggested supply

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procedures with:

...The cost, lead time, and other problems connected with change-over to ADP, I consider prohibitive. Adequate facilities (air conditioning, humidity-controlled) for ADP would have to be constructed; considerable additional warehousing would be required; and stable power must be provided. By the time all actions are completed, the role of USAF should be considerably reduced by mission turn-over to the VNAF. In addition, the change-overs to ADP that I have observed in the past resulted in seriously reduced supply support for a three to six month period due to poor feed-ins, familiarization and related problems. This could not be tolerated in SEA...

Reflecting the reasons the Clark AB support to SEA was elimina-

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ted as a Base Supply system and a Base Supply function was established at Tan Son Nhut, Col. Walker added his opinions why existing functions could be supported in the future with the manual transaction procedures:

...The 405th should be able to support the cited areas, although they have been woefully weak in the past. It is desirable that a highly qualified NCO, assigned to the 33d BASO and responsible to him, be placed on permanent duty with the 405th SEA priority section to personally monitor all our priority actions. Adequate control and accounting procedures must be established to insure that our funds, positioned with the 405th, are inviolate for our use and not siphoned off...

One of the major areas of required improvement in the existing supply support facilities in SEA was WAR Readiness Materiel (WEM).

#### War Readiness Materiel

War Readiness Materiel (WEM) was pre-positioned and joint utilized (JU) at 2d Air Division locations in Southeast Asia wherever possible and within available storage capabilities. This lack of storage space was a major problem in Southeast Asia, allowing only a minimum amount of WEM storage in Vietnam and in Thailand. This made it necessary for Southeast Asia BEMOs to requisition WEM from the depots, for shipment to and storage at Clark AB, P.I. This created a split responsibility, in effect making the 405th FW BEMO a property custodian for the two SEA BEMOs located at Bangkok, Thailand and Tan Son Nhut in SVN.

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Col. Harold E. Walker, Director of Materiel, 2d Air Division,  
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 commented on the WRM program in Southeast Asia, saying:

...WRM was unsatisfactory when I arrived, and remained so at my departure. The reasons for the unsatisfactory status are many; split responsibility between the 405th and 2d Air Division, lack of funding, lack of storage, and lack of personnel, to name a few...

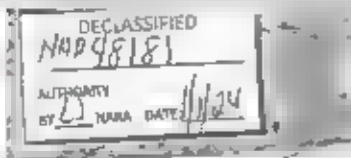
Lack of funds has been a serious stumbling block in the past, but it was understood that it would be taken care of in the future  
 28  
 and Southeast Asia would be 100 per cent funded for WRM.

Another serious problem was the unprogrammed use of WRM, and subsequent accounting and replacement of the equipment. An excellent example of this was exercise "Boon Choo" in which WRM was used, much of it being accountable under SEA WRM stock piles. On 1 July 1964, 75 per cent of the materiel had not been returned to storage, nor had it been dropped from the SEA records at Clark. This resulted in the problem where SEA BEMOs could not requisition replacement items.

In April, procedures were set down by PACAF in an attempt to solve the WRM situation. PACAF directed that immediate action be taken by BEMOs of the 33d and 35th Tactical Groups at Tan Son Nhut and Don Muang, Thailand to requisition WRM equipment  
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shortages. Base Supply at Tan Son Nhut was advised to see that materiel would be marked for delivery direct to Clark AB for storage purposes, the accountability remaining with SEA BEMOs. This required the Clark BEMO  
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 to acknowledge receipt of all WRM equipment and supplies belonging to the 33d and 35th

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Tactical Groups by processing AF Form 601B (custody receipt) to the applicable BEMO.

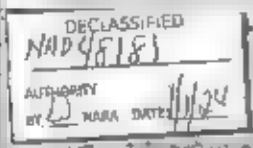
In an attempt to eliminate depletion of WRM stocks in storage for SEA activities due to exercises or other short notice requirements, PACAF began planning in April 1964 for a "Gray Eagle"<sup>31</sup> type housekeeping package. This would be used in future as a source of emergency requirement and would not interfere with SEA WRM stock piles which would remain intact. The "Gray Eagle" package would be capable of supporting four 100 man increments under a "Bare Base" concept. These four packages would preclude all unplanned or unprogrammed developments and eliminate all WRM degradation of sets as experienced in "Boon Choo", "Mobile Command Post", "Lucky Dragon", and "Water Pump."<sup>32</sup> This programmed PACAF procedure required AFIC/AWAF approval which was not received by 30 June 1964.

In July 1964 a PACAF/13AF/2AD WRM conference was to be held<sup>33</sup> in an effort to correct the unsatisfactory situation. Col. Harold E. Walker, Director of Materiel, 2d Air Division said that this, "will not be done overnight."<sup>34</sup>

Noting some of the most important problems in the WRM area, Col. Walker continued:

...Most WRM that is not JU is stored at Clark, resulting in requisitioning by FB 5269 with instructions to the depot to ship to Clark for storage. Accounting procedures are so cumbersome under this split responsibility as to make control and management impossible. A project has been initiated to construct appropriate storage facilities at TSN and Don

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Muang. Upon completion, all possible WRM should be moved forward and a WRM office of three to six personnel established in each SEA BEMO. This is most important in that the sophisticated acquisition, accounting reporting, and storage of WRM is a supply system within itself, requiring extensive knowledge and experience. It obviously cannot be supported as an additional duty, as now attempted. One additional NCO should be assigned to the Supply Division, 2d Air Division, with primary duty of WRM supervision. A complete and accurate inventory of WRM assets must be completed before effective procedures can be implemented...

In a letter to 2d Air Division units in Thailand and South Vietnam, 5 May 64, Col. Walker impressed upon the personnel that personnel motivation is an important function of the WRM program: <sup>35</sup>

...Assignment of monitors to the program as an additional duty or on a temporary basis fails to induce sufficient motivation and results in lack of understanding of clear, concise policy. The WRM reporting requirements alone demand that knowledgeable, well qualified personnel be assigned as monitors...

On 13 May 1964, 2MSS-WI set up a requirement to both BEMOs at Thailand and Tan Son Nhut for a monthly WRM Status Report. This report was another improvement in the WRM program that 2d Air Division established so that it could be kept current on WRM matters and to facilitate the monitoring of the overall WRM <sup>36</sup> program. In the report information to be compiled included; item commodity, quantity (units) authorized, quantity stored in place, quantity stored Clark AB, per cent stored in place, per cent stored at Clark AB, and specific remarks in reference to the <sup>37</sup> WRM program at that reporting base.

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In July 1964 it was planned to provide approximately 40,000 square feet of covered space at each BEMO location in SVN and Thailand to meet WRM requirements in Southeast Asia.<sup>38</sup> After these storage areas are completed, as much WRM as possible will be transferred from Clark to the appropriate BEMO in SEA.

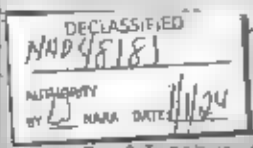
Overall, the WRM program was greatly neglected in Southeast Asia, and the fault lay with both SEA agencies and Clark AB. Through the conscientious concern displayed by 2d Air Division and BEMOs in Southeast Asia during the first six months of 1964, the WRM problem was slowly being mastered and was expected to continue to show overall improvement in future reports.

#### Maintenance

With the arrival of U.S. Air Force personnel and aircraft in Southeast Asia, all maintenance personnel were assigned to Vietnam and Thailand on a temporary duty status, this constant changeover of personnel causing many hardships. Soon after the 2d Air Division became a permanent organization in Vietnam in October 1962, the operational commitments of U.S. Air Force units in SVN and Thailand increased two and three fold. This resulted in increased maintenance and many of the temporary duty personnel were unaccustomed to the varied aircraft that flew in and out of the RVN.

In 1963, Air Force officials attempted to eliminate these problems and CAMBONS (Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadrons) were established at different bases such as the 23d CAMRON, Da Nang; 33d CAMRON, Tan Son Nhut; and the 34th CAMRON at Bien Hoa.<sup>39</sup> As

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these CAMRONS were put into operation, present maintenance procedures were eliminated and AFM 66-1 procedures were put into effect along with the arrival of PACVAN shops to aid maintenance personnel.

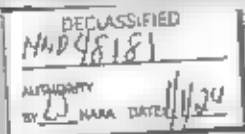
<sup>40</sup> The TDY status was eliminated except for a few augmented isolated cases and permanent party maintenance personnel began taking part in the American Military Assistance Program to the South Vietnamese in their struggle to defeat communist infestation of their small country.

Originally only three types of aircraft were being maintained by U.S. Air Force maintenance personnel, the T-28, B-26 and C-123. In June 1964 the list was almost entirely new with the phasing out of the tired B-26s and T-28s. Only the C-123 still stood by representing the original three.

<sup>41</sup> In August 1963, maintenance procedures began to improve and with the implementation of STAR procedures within the Tan Son Nhut Base Supply program, the MORS and O/R rates began to improve and were at satisfactory levels in June 1964.

The CAMRONS each had a capability to maintain their own aircraft except for periodic inspection (PE) and IRAN. These programs were set up for the 2d Air Division at other bases outside Vietnam, but still in SEA. Increased maintenance workloads were noted when the C-130 and C-135 aircraft began arriving in Vietnam, along with other transports, to facilitate an increased airlift of priority items into the South Vietnam and Thailand bases. Many maintenance personnel never worked on jet aircraft previously but maintenance was completed as required.

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# CAMRONS

Each of the groups located in Vietnam, directly under the operational control of 2d Air Division operated its CAMRON under AFM 66-1 procedures, accomplishing field maintenance to the limit of its capabilities. Only the 34th Tactical Group at Bien Hoa was able to perform its own periodic maintenance. The periodic maintenance for the 23d and 33d Tactical Groups was completed at Clark AB in the Philippine Islands.<sup>42</sup>

Each CAMRON was equipped with a PACVAN complex composed of six vans each at the 23d and 33d, and seven at the 34th. Because the 34th was maintaining tactical fighter-bombers (A-1E Skyraider), an armament van was included as the seventh van. The PACVAN concept was excellent for a limited period of time for forward base operation but very inadequate for long term operations. Each of the bases augmented their PACVANs with normal maintenance shops. There were no other PACVANs in the SVN maintenance system.

In his end of tour report, Col. Harold E. Walker, Director of Materiel, 2d Air Division suggested that action be taken to acquire and equip additional PACVAN sets for WRM. The PACVANs for 2d Air Division, when received were over 600 line items short, and other items were unserviceable although identified with serviceable parts tags. As in much of the equipment shipped to SEA, it continued to be a major problem.<sup>44</sup>

In July 1963 there was strong and sustained opposition to implementation of AFM 66-1 procedures within SEA. This was largely due to personnel in place who were not knowledgeable of AFM 66-1

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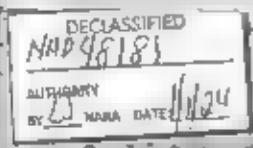
and its management aspects. As Col. Walker related, "This opposition has been eliminated by an awareness of the results obtained and by the large influx of SAC "believers" in the system.<sup>45</sup>

Implementation of Exception Time Accounting (ETA) and Maintenance Data Collection (MDC) in SEA was regarded as a mistake which was corrected since the implementation of AFM 66-1 procedures. MDC requirements continued to be complied with, but all processing was done at Clark.<sup>46</sup>

With the implementation of AFM 66-1 procedures, maintenance of the Southeast Asian fleet of aircraft began to show tremendous improvement over the previous year. In July 1963, aircraft O/R rates were totally unsatisfactory, and the aircraft in many cases were unsafe to fly. Colonel Walker commented on these procedures which caused unsatisfactory O/R rates:<sup>47</sup>

...It was obvious that only safety-or-flight maintenance had been performed for a long time. There was no quality control program, no engine conditioning, and very little management. Reporting procedures were poor, and reports were inaccurate. Some corrective actions were in progress at that time, as the result of the then just-completed TDY visit of Lt. Col. Stevens, PACAF. A strong quality-control and engine conditioning program was started immediately, with commendable results. All aircraft were given a quality-control shake-down and returned to an airworthy status. These actions, combined with improved reporting procedures and the implementation of STAR procedures, resulted in immediate and drastic improvement of O/R rates. An O/R rate ranging in the 80-per cent-plus bracket has been constantly maintained for many months in spite of rapid

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personnel turnover, frequent personnel shortages, and heavy overflying of the scheduled program...

To augment the maintenance in Southeast Asia, contract<sup>48</sup> maintenance was established with Air Viet Nam in May 1963, under the supervision of Detachment 4, APEPE, primarily for heavy maintenance on battle-or crash-damaged aircraft. Aircraft IRAN for C-54 aircraft was established at Hong Kong and C-123<sup>49</sup> aircraft at Taiwan.

#### Aircraft Assets

U.S. aircraft assets in South Vietnam in Jun 1964 were steadily increasing with the addition of the A-1E at Bien Hoa, and temporary duty aircraft from other stations within the Southeast Asia area. At Tan Son Nhut, the 33d Tactical Group maintained two squadrons of C-123 "Providers", three aircraft of which are Ranch Hand spray aircraft used in defoliation flights in South Vietnam and one a VC-123 passenger configured aircraft. The 36 C-123s belong to the 309th and 310th Troop Carrier Squadrons of the 315th<sup>50</sup> Troop Carrier Group.

Also at Tan Son Nhut, as supported by the 33d CAMRON for maintenance were four C-54 aircraft assigned to support the R&R program under the direction of MACV. Other MACV aircraft assigned included one VC-47, two U-3Bs, six TDY HF-101s and two RB-57s, the latter two type aircraft being used for reconnaissance. The organizational maintenance on all these aircraft was accomplished by the 33d CAMRON except FE which was accomplished at Clark or<sup>51</sup> at the home bases of TDY aircraft.

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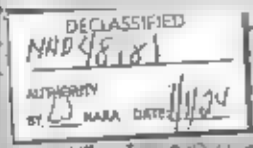
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At Bien Hoa, the 34th Tactical Group was accountable for the only USAF tactical fighter bombers in Vietnam. Being the only combat organization in South Vietnam, the CAMRON at Bien Hoa was equipped to do organization and field maintenance along with periodic inspections. With the withdrawal of B-26s and T-28s from the theater in April and June of 1964 respectively, the A-1E was rushed into service beginning 30 May 1964, and two squadrons of twenty-five aircraft each were planned for the 1st Air Commando's assigned to the 34th Tactical Group. As of 30 June 1964, fifteen of the A-1Es were in place. Along with the 50 aircraft, another 10 A-1Es were planned for normal attrition. Plans were for a second fifteen aircraft to arrive in August 1964, and the full complement of A-1Es was to be in place by January 1965.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to the A-1E aircraft, the 34th had six C-47s authorized and assigned. Also authorized were 22 O-1Fs, four U-10s, and two SAC U-2 aircraft operating on Project "Lucky Dragon." Of the authorized 22 O-1Fs, only 19 were on hand due to aircraft losses, but another five had been transferred from the Army. In June these five aircraft were being processed at Air Vietnam and were to be transferred to the VNAF in August 1964.<sup>53</sup>

The A-1Es and C-47s at Bien Hoa were frequently deployed from that base to useable bases which were at Soc Trang, Da Nang, and Nha Trang. New Can Tho, when construction is completed, will be a prime deployment base in the Mekong Delta area. At the deployment sites only crew chief type maintenance was accomplished out of spare parts kits deployed with the aircraft and all major aircraft maintenance was completed at Bien Hoa.<sup>54</sup>

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At Da Nang, the 23d Air Base Group was authorized and assigned sixteen C-123 "Providers" which were flown by crews of the 311th Troop Carrier Squadron. Frequently, however, a deployed strike team from Bien Hoa operated from Da Nang and was supported by the 23d CAMRON. At the end of June 1964, there were eight F-100s TDY at DaNang from Clark due to the Laotian situation which were supported by TDY personnel from Clark. There were two HU-16s also on station for rescue operations in lieu of programmed rescue helicopters due sometime between August and November 1964.<sup>55</sup>

At Don Muang in Thailand the 35th Tactical Group had six F-100 aircraft deployed on a rotational basis to Takhli and four deployed F-102s. Also periodically at Don Muang were two or three deployed C-123 aircraft from Tan Son Nhut for in-country airlift.<sup>56</sup>

In March 1964, four T-28 aircraft were transferred from Vietnam to Thailand, but still responsible to the commander of the U. S. Forces assigned to 2d Air Division. Maintenance teams from the tactical Air Command were moved into Udorn, Thailand to support these aircraft.<sup>\*</sup>

#### NORS and O/R Rates

With the institution of STAR procedures within the Tan Son Nhut Base Supply, maintenance O/R and NORS rates improved during the first six months of 1964. The only serious problem with these rates was in the U-10 aircraft, but after being placed on STAR procedure priority lists, the NORS and O/R rates improved immediately. The rates were:<sup>57</sup>

\*Chapter 1, 2d Air Division History, Jan-Jun 1964.

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# NORS Rates

<u>Aircraft</u>	<u>Max</u> <u>No. Asgd</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>
B-26	13	0.8	6.0	39.1	—	—	—
T-28	13	3.9	3.8	3.5	0.7	3.4	0.0
A-1E	15	—	—	—	—	—	4.9
U-10	4	39.5	57.4	45.6	0.0	3.9	10.7
O-1F	22	6.5	9.4	5.5	1.8	1.8	0.0
C-47(1AGS)	6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0
VC-47	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.0	0.0
C-123(23d)	16	5.3	3.4	3.0	1.2	3.8	4.4
C-123(33d)	33	1.0	0.1	1.5	1.2	1.8	3.1
VC-123	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.0
C-54	4	1.01	11.1	0.1	12.1	1.9	3.0
U-3B	2	44.2	44.3	0.0	0.0	5.4	30.7
RF-101(A/M)	6	0.0	20.1	20.1	23.1	17.6	6.0
RB-57(A/M)	2	0.0	0.0	36.7	15.8	3.7	0.0

# O/R Rates

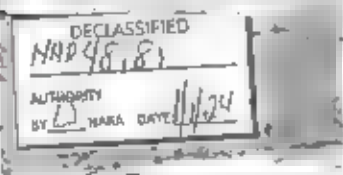
<u>Aircraft</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>
B-26	74.3	71.8	84.3	—	—	—
T-28	84.4	75.6	74.3	89.2	89.1	96.9
A-1E	—	—	—	—	—	88.5
U-10	53.1	26.7	42.6	85.3	76.0	77.2
O-1F	83.3	76.7	88.2	88.7	83.4	85.7
C-47	83.5	74.9	89.4	85.3	83.5	79.3
VC-47	93.0	81.6	95.8	100.0	88.3	90.0
C-123(23d)	79.2	84.7	86.2	86.1	81.7	84.5
C-123(33d)	79.6	80.6	76.8	81.7	77.8	80.9
U-3B	41.5	51.5	85.7	92.3	81.1	56.9
C-54	81.7	70.0	86.0	62.9	84.5	84.2
VC-123	60.5	96.2	85.7	95.4	91.4	99.0
RF-101(A/M)	95.0	80.0	80.0	77.0	76.0	92.0
RB-57	90.0	62.8	56.3	85.8	65.6	82.6

# Aircraft Deficiencies

## Structural Failure of the B-26

The reliable B-26, being used by the 1st Air Commando Squadron at Bien Hoa, was beginning to tire in 1963. In 1964, several wing structure failures in flight ended the combat role of the B-26 in Southeast Asia.

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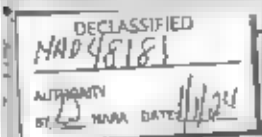
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The seriousness of the wing failure was noted in a PACAF request to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF) on 31 Aug 63 concerning the B-26 structural integrity. Realizing the fact that on-site teams in the past had been unable to determine definite cause factors or recommendations, PACAF requested CONUS investigations of a non-IRAN'd aircraft and the best possible talent to include the OQAMA team presently in Vietnam at the time of the problem. PACAF realized the necessity of immediate knowledge of possible wing failures cause factors and recommendations so that they could be implemented by field teams at the earliest date. <sup>58</sup>

Inspection and tests continued on the aircraft and in February 1964, a B-26 of the 1st Air Commando Wing being flown at Eglin AFB Fla, crashed in flight from a suspected wing failure. This grounded all B-26s in Vietnam and was the virtual end to their combat role. The B-26 at Eglin was completing a strafing run using flares to light the target when it appeared that a wing separated from the aircraft as it started to pull up. The strafing run appeared to be on a dive angle of about 20-25 degrees. The aircraft completely disintegrated upon impact with the ground and was enveloped in fire. <sup>59</sup>

A preliminary inspection of the crash site revealed the B-26 crashed as a result of the failure of the left wing. Detailed examination revealed by a Norton metallurgist was a failure resulting from metal fatigue. It was also revealed that, that particular aircraft underwent a detailed inspection including X-Ray and Dye penetrant in October 1963 and had accumulated a total of only 137

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hours at the time of the accident. This indicated a very rapid rate in which the B-26 wings were beginning to feel the stress of age.  
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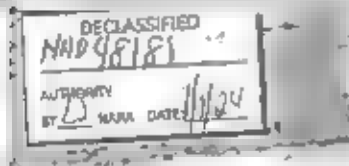
The Eglin crash restricted all South Vietnam B-26 aircraft from flight immediately and eventually, PACAF, 2d Air Division and 13th Air Force all agreed that the B-26 was unsafe for any further flights under combat conditions and the last B-26 departed the theater 8 April 1963.

#### Structural Failure of the T-28

Three T-28 wing failures resulted in the ultimate phase out of the single engine fighter bomber in June 1964. The first of the three failures took place in October 1963 and the final failure was on 9 April 1964, the day after the last B-26 left Vietnam.

The first wing failure took place out of Da Nang in the northern portion of Vietnam on 8 October 1963. The outboard section of the wing failed at the attaching point. The front and back attaching bolts had sheared and the center bolt was missing when the Director of Materiel, 2d Air Division personally viewed the wreckage of the aircraft. After the crash all T-28 aircraft possessed by 2d Air Division were inspected and of the 13 aircraft, two bolts were found to have circumferential cracks at the junction of the shank head.  
61

The second crash of a T-28 due to wing failure occurred on 24 March 1964 at Soc Trang. It was the second failure of the right wing and from statements gathered from eye witnesses, was identical \*Incomplete files maintained by responsible agencies at the time of the B-26 problem made it impossible to provide more information of the B-26 structural failures.

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with the failure at Da Nang in October. Eye witness reports stated that the wing seemed to fail at about the gun line, or location of the gun along the wing and it separated clear in one piece. This<sup>62</sup> indicated identical failure for the two crashed aircraft.

The Director of Materiel, 2d Air Division, directed that all T-28 wing bolts be removed and magnafluxed as an immediate corrective action, and that all pilots release bomb loads under low or neutral "G" conditions prior to pull-out from dive-combing runs. At that time a team was requested from North American Aviation for the purpose of analyzing condition of stress being imposed upon the wings of the T-28.<sup>63</sup>

On 10 April 1964, one day following the third T-28 wing failure, a final report was received by an investigating team which included Mr. Howard D. Anderson and Mr. Justin Mac Donald from McClellan AFB, Calif. on the second T-28 crash. Also advising the team was Mr. David McNeil, North American Aviation technical representative and Captain Donald E. Thoman, aeronautical engineer from APRFE. Advisors also included many representatives from 2d Air Division including the Director of Materiel, commander of the 34th<sup>64</sup> Tactical Group and the Director of Safety, 2d Air Division.

It was realized that the aircraft had travelled approximately 4,000 feet after the wing separated from the aircraft at an altitude of 1,700 feet to 1,800 feet. Eye witness reports from the flight leader and wing man indicated that the RH wing separated at or near the RH inboard gun station as previously mentioned. The aircraft at the time of the failure was in a 35-40 degree dive angle with 100

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pound bombs on stations 1 and 6. Two 260 pound frag bombs had been dropped on 2 previous passes. The 100 pound bombs had not been released nor had the pilot started his pull out when the wing  
65  
failed.

Because the crash was in Viet Cong (VC) held territory, it was difficult to reach the crash site before the local populace had removed much of the debris. Therefore an actual reconstruction at the scene of the crash was impossible. The commander of the 34th Tactical Group met with the other members of the flight. They indicated that the RH wing folded up and separated near the gun line. They saw the wing strike the RH horizontal stabilizer and elevator and marks on the recovered elevator verified this observation. The elevator was the only part of the crashed aircraft that was able  
66  
to be salvaged.

Indications were that aircrews of the 1st ACS were flying within the operational flight limits sent out by SMAMA 7 November 1963. A review of the aircraft's records indicated a hard landing was made with the aircraft 10 days prior to the accident. An inspection had failed to reveal any structural damage. Two days before the accident another hard landing was made, deflating the right main strut of the aircraft. The landing configuration of the aircraft consisted of two each 100 pound bombs, two each 260 pound bombs, full 315 round 50 cal. gun pods and approximately eight hundred pounds of fuel. The landing was not written up but the crew chief did inspect the aircraft. No visible damage was detected and the strut was re-inflated. The landing was affected on a 3,000 foot strip with  
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prevailing 90 degree cross winds.

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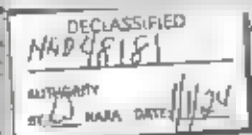
be written up and a thorough inspection should be made by removing gun pods and access plates that would enable internal inspection of spar cap, webs, and fittings as pointed out to the Q.C. personnel; (4) equipment suitable for steam cleaning aircraft should be obtained to improve the maintenance of the aircraft to facilitate the thoroughness of inspections

The 10 April final report was too late to have any effect on the results of the final of the three T-28 crashes which proved to be the end of the T-28 combat role in South Vietnam.

Immediately following the wing failure of the T-28 on 9 Apr, fighting was still going on in the area and an inspection team was unable to view the crash site. However, the following morning 2d Air Division safety personnel were airlifted into the area and photographed the debris. The 2d Air Division flying safety officer related that the LH wing was approximately 125 yards short of the aircraft impact area indicating that the wing had failed in flight, just at wing station 28, which is located just outboard from the wing to fuselage attaching point. The flying safety officer returned with fragments of the LH wing spar caps and on inspection could not visually detect any signs of existing cracks or metal fatigue. The fragments were forwarded to SMAMA for metallurgical evaluation.

The developed photos of the crash, taken by the 2d Air Division flying safety officer, revealed; (1) the aircraft impacted with the engine developing power; (2) the left hand wing separated from the aircraft at wing station 28; (3) the forward lower spar cap was cracked at approximately wing station 60; (4) the upper surface

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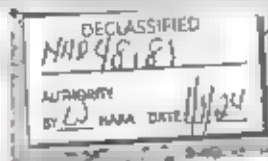
of the leading edge had severe compression buckles, typical to the manner in which the Static Test Wing failed under a load of 8.76 "G"; (5) the RH wing flap had separated from the RH wing near the impact area and it was bowed up indicating that the RH wing had bowed upward also; (6) there appeared to be a hole in the lower surface of the LH wing approximately at station 75, that could have been sustained from gunfire larger than 30 cal.<sup>72</sup>

An eye witness report of the T-28 crash indicated that the plane was in a 30 degree dive strafing pass. For some unknown reason the pilot delayed the pull out until approximately 500 feet with the LH wing coming off around 150-200 feet. The aircraft, only the day before the accident, had been inspected by the SMAMA team and nothing was found to indicate existing structural damage. However, the aircraft had been very oily and dirty and a detailed inspection had not been performed.<sup>73</sup>

The photographs taken of the accident by the 2d Air Division flying safety officer clearly indicated that the aircraft had been subject to in-flight loads similar to the loads that had failed test wings in the Static Test Wing tests in the laboratory. The LH wing had partially failed in at least three other locations other than where it had separated from the aircraft. The right wing flap indicated a possible RH wing deflection. The aircraft showed signs of receiving enemy gun fire; however, it was not in the area of the primary failure. It was possible that the gun fire might have caused the pilot to execute a high "G" pullout.<sup>74</sup>

The inspection team failed to change its decision in regards to the second crash. Special attention was placed on the processing

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of all Jungle Jim aircraft through an IRAN program as soon as possible. This was believed necessary as the Jungle Jim aircraft had been in combat service longer than other T-28 aircraft and had been subjected to heavier loads. The team also suggested that the leading edge skins should be replaced due to the numerous repairs made in the field as a result of extended combat utilization.<sup>75</sup>

It was determined by the team that none of the three T-28 wing failures indicated any type of a trend and were definitely unrelated incidents. All three failures occurred at different places on the wing and under entirely different load conditions. In the first incident, the outer wing panel separated from the center wing panel due to the attaching bolts failing. The second incident resulted from wing failure at approximately wing station 105 while the aircraft was subjected to 1-1½ G loads. The last accident was a result of the wing failing at wing station 28 under extremely high "G" loads applied at the time of the failure.<sup>76</sup>

On 1 May 1964, 2d Air Division received notification from SMAMA at McClellan AFB, Calif., of the metallurgical examinations of the T-28 wing spars. The metallurgical examinations began after Mr. Anderson's return to SMAMA and the lab test revealed that: (1) the lower spar cap from the third crash showed definite signs of axial tension failure with some signs of bending in the positive vertical plane. The upper spar cap broke in tension-bending load with a hinge effect on the upper surface of the cap. This indicated that the lower surface failed first as would normally be expected, due to a high vertical positive load on the wing. There was no evidence

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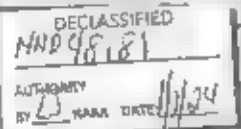
of fatigue phenomena in any of the spar fractures; (2) from skin samples removed from an aircraft that had crashed at Bien Hoa for other than wing failure, tests were made. The skin samples were de-painted and checked for corrosion. Only slight pitting was found in the outer surface where paint and alclad had been removed by nicks or scratches. The corrosion effect was insignificant on all skin samples. Mechanical properties tests of the samples indicated that all specimens met and exceeded the minimum requirements for new material; (3) the two bolts removed from the first aircraft wing failure were examined by magnetic particle inspection and X-Ray and both bolts had no cracks or defects. The metallurgical report confirmed both trip reports by Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Anderson.<sup>77</sup>

C-123 Wing Wrinkles.

In June 1964, the C-123 "Provider" was the oldest U.S. aircraft still flying in the South Vietnam war against the communist Viet Cong. The C-123 arrived in the Southeast Asian theater three years before and was still the backbone of the SEA in-country airlift system.

On 4 May 1964, the C-123 developed serious damage due to what was determined as overstress, when wing wrinkles were found on the top portion of the wings. Immediately the Director of Materiel, 2d Air Division contacted 13th Air Force and began a complete investigation of all C-123 aircraft in RVN. At the same time the two aircraft on which the wrinkles were initially discovered, were input to Air America and Air Vietnam for a thorough inspection.<sup>78</sup>

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After a complete inspection of the wings by SEA personnel of all the C-123s in Vietnam and Thailand, it was found that 13 had wrinkles on the top side of the wing and three of these aircraft had developed wrinkles so serious it was necessary for 2d Air Division to ground them from further flight until repaired. The balance of the damaged aircraft had wrinkles of a lesser degree and were considered safe to continue regular operations.

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On 9 May 1964, 13th Air Force MHE suggested that the aircraft be test-hopped to determine if the wrinkles would diminish in flight. This was based on the assumption that the upward bending of the wings in flight would eliminate the wrinkles which may have been caused from unsupported ground weight of the aircraft structure.

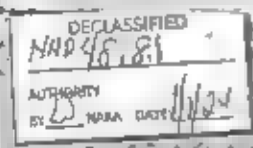
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It was determined at 2d Air Division that due to the location of the wrinkles on the top side of the wings, they would increase in size during flight. It was also suggested that the wrinkles may have been caused by heavy turbulence while in flight or excessive positive "G" loads during tactical missions. The aircraft landed and took off in outlying small airfields without paved runways and extremely short approaches which were prevalent in Vietnam.

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One of the three seriously damaged aircraft had damaged leading edges on both wings consisting of compressed and stress wrinkles and oil canning of the skin. It also had damage to the wing leading edge skin, inboard of the right nacelle and at wing station 0 top skin aft of the spar. It was found that the damage to these two areas was restricted to the external skin. From station 212 to

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230 there were  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch deep compressing wrinkles and stress wrinkles. After removing the top skin it was found that the inner corrugated skin was also wrinkled in the same pattern as the outer skin. In general it appeared that when stress compression wrinkles are over  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches deep or are sharp, structural damage resulted to the support member. The corrugated inner skin of the lead edge was subject to the same type of wrinkles as the outer skin.

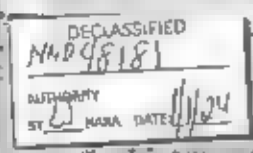
Upon inspection of all 52 aircraft in SEA, all the C-123s at Da Nang were found to have no wrinkles while 13 at Tan Son Nhut were damaged. This had a true age trend as the aircraft all had a noticed similarity in actual hours flown except for a few isolated cases. The total airframe flying hours of the damaged aircraft as of 5 May 1964 were:

Aircraft No.	Total Hours Flown
54-645	4103.3
55-4520	3674.4
55-4534	3730.8
55-4548	3645.8
55-4557	3664.3
56-4365	3741.2
56-4369	3867.8
56-4374	3769.5
56-4376	3926.1
56-4378	2806.0
56-4387	3610.9
57-6292	3909.8
57-6294	4048.1

The aircraft at Da Nang were all 1954 and 1955 models of the C-123 while the damaged aircraft ranged from 1954 to 1957.

All the aircraft at Da Nang and Tan Son Nhut were rechecked by the structural engineer from APEFE and all the aircraft at Da Nang were in good condition while each aircraft at Tan Son Nhut (37 of them) were damaged to varying degrees, with the majority sus-

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taining minor to negligible damage. Two aircraft were at a point of damage necessitating immediate repair. An inspection criteria was established to visibly check each C-123 aircraft for wrinkles at 50 flying hour intervals and during preflight inspections. If the wrinkles found approached or exceeded one quarter of an inch in depth and crossed a supporting member, the aircraft was to be repaired immediately.

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As a result of the structural engineer's inspection of the C-123 damage, it was determined that there were no structural or design type defects involved and no airframe modifications required.

Skin wrinkles were attributed to normal attrition. It was also determined that maximum performance operations were the major cause factors of the accelerated attrition rate of the C-123 in Vietnam. Other aircraft of the C-123 fleet around the world, not involved in continuous maximum performance operations as the result of combat, were not affected by the accelerated attrition rate and developed no skin wrinkles.

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The aircraft at Da Nang, which suffered no damage, although they had flown a comparable number of total airframe hours to the aircraft at Tan Son Nhut, had only been in Vietnam one year while the other C-123s had been in the theater since 1961.

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#### Aircraft Losses-Accidents

More than 15 aircraft incidents were reported between 1 January 1964 and 30 June 1964, involving U.S. manned aircraft within the 2d Air Division control in South Vietnam and Thailand. This



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included aircraft deficiencies, accidents, and combat damage and losses.

The main problems involved the end of the T-28 and B-26 in SEA and the minor deficiencies discovered in the dependable C-123. the losses and incidents listed were the major accidents and  
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combat losses during that period.

#### Major Aircraft Incidents

7 Jan 64	B-26 - Tail failure during test flight-loss
14 Jan 64	B-26 - Combat loss
14 Jan 64	T-28 - Combat loss
21 Jan 64	T-28 - Engine failure-out of fuel-loss
22 Jan 64	C-47 - Engine failure on take off-loss
7 Feb 64	C-118- (Thailand) Prop blast damage from C-130
11 Feb 64	B-26 - (Florida) Wing failure during test combat mission-loss
18 Feb 64	T-28 - Combat loss
19 Feb 64	T-28 - Combat loss
24 Mar 64	T-28 - Wing failure in combat - loss
27 Mar 64	C-119 - Operational loss-aircraft not found
9 Apr 64	T-28 - Wing failure in combat-loss
1 May 64	T-28 - Power loss on takeoff-loss
4 May 64	C-123 - Skin wrinkles, all C-123s checked
26 Jun 64	T-28 - Combat loss

#### Fuel, Oil and Lubricants

In the area of fuel, oil and lubricants, SEA was supported by the sub-area petroleum offices of Vietnam and Thailand. All avgas

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jet fuel, and avoil were provided by contract with ESSO, Shell and Cal-Tex. At Tan Son Nhut and Don Muang the U.S. had contract into-plane service. At most other stations, such as Bien Hoa, it was contract into-tank service, with Air Force personnel performing all U.S. aircraft servicing. For avgase, jet oil and methanol alcohol, Middletown served as the direct support agency through the Base Supply facility at Clark AB, P.I. The 2d Air Division procurement office had contracts with the ESSO company for water alcohol for either into-plane or drum service, dependent on the location. At Da Nang and Bien Hoa there were tactical airfield dispensing systems and at Pleiku there was "Bladder Storage" only. Two additional systems remained in storage at Clark AB for back-up if required for use in SEA.

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At Bien Hoa, where the 1st Air Commando Squadron was positioned with tactical aircraft, the U.S. obtained an underground storage system on loan from the VNAP. The facility was recently contracted and completed 1 April 1964.

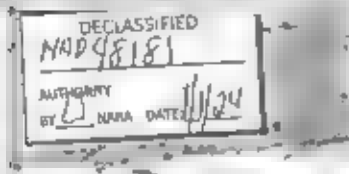
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Col. Harold E. Walker, Director of Material, 2d Air Division related his views on the POL situation in Vietnam. He said:

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...No major problems exist in POL except as involve contingency operations and rapid build-ups such as are currently being experienced. To date, we have been able to respond to all emergency situations adequately, but we are doing it the hard way. Apparently, the more or less inviolate rule that jets would not be introduced in Vietnam is passe' but we have not taken appropriate action for their support, i.e.: JP-4, LOX, nitrogen, vacuum sweepers, barriers, etc. Only four bases in Vietnam are jet-capable: TSN, Bien Hoa,

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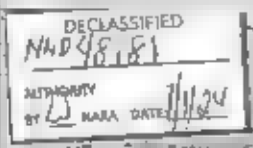
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Da Nang, and Nha Trang. Sufficient JP-4 storage should be pre-positioned at each location for anticipated build-ups. Contractor resupply is limited due to facilities, and provisions for pipeline resupply should be considered. Fuel could easily be the Achilles' heel of RVN. Eighty per cent of storage capacity is located at Nha Be and is highly vulnerable to VC attack or sabotage. I'm sure that the only reason the VC have not knocked it out is that it figures in their own economics. If Nha Be is lost, it will take a minimum of five days, under current emergency plans, to bring in tankers. Sufficient fuel should be pre-positioned to continue operations pending tanker resupply. Sufficient LOX plants, LOX and nitrogen tanks and carts should be pre-positioned in WRM. Vacuum, rotary, and magnetic sweepers were required at all bases. Appropriate quantities for each base were recommended by 13AF MDC letter of 14 July 1964 to PACAF. Current status is unknown. It is essential that blue-suiters or contractor take over the maintenance of POL systems and runway barriers in Thailand, since the Thais are apparently incapable or decline to maintain them. This action is currently under way.

In an effort to combat the possible emergency problems of immediate POL supply fifty 500-gallon collapsible fuel drums were received at Tan Son Nhut on 28 February 1964 to provide emergency air transport of bulk POL products. In June 1964, the drums were located as follows; 30 at Bien Hoa, 15 at Da Nang, and 5 at Nha Trang. On 30 June 1964, five of the drums at Da Nang were shipped to Udorn, Thailand to resupply Nakhon Phanom in support of ARS aircraft. In order to check the capabilities of the 500 gallon collapsible drum, a test was run from Tan Son Nhut to Da Nang. The full drum was transported to Da Nang and defueled there to determine what difficulties might arise during an actual operation. The test was a complete success.

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Funding Problems in Southeast Asia

Funding in Southeast Asia was one of the more serious clogs in the supply and maintenance systems. There were two areas of funding responsibility, Vietnam and Thailand. Funding in these two countries differed greatly because of the two separate missions.<sup>93</sup>

A special funding, not related to 2d Air Division for MAAG and MACV dependent education, school busses, etc., had to be administered as these monies were not accounted for under the Military Assistance Program. A PACAF study group working in conjunction with 13th Air Force has been established in order to solve these problems. In the scope of the study group's mission, separate funding for Thailand outside Vietnam would have to be accomplished.<sup>94</sup>

Due to the complicated funding systems in supply support problems increased. In February 1964 it was necessary to restrict all requisitioning to mission essential items only, with resultant depletion of stocks, drying up of the pipelines, and constant customer complaints. No relief in this area was received in Vietnam until May.

The reason for this depletion of stock and requisitioning was due to the stagnation of 2d Air Division funds. In the 3d quarter of FY'64, it became evident that 2d Air Division funds, cited on requisitions to Base Supply at Clark AB, P.I. were remaining idle as backorders because Clark did not have funds of its own to requisition desired items and/or their stock levels were exhausted.

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This was a direct result of the utilization of a credit allowance system to fund another command and was not clearly evident in reviewing the system. <sup>96</sup>

Attempts were made to obtain direct citation of 2d Air Division Funds on Clark AB requisitions stateside, or credit MOD (Miscellaneous Obligor Document) procedures in paragraph 20107, AFM 177-102; neither suggestion was favorable received by the 405th FW at Clark. <sup>97</sup>

<sup>98</sup>  
Paragraph 20107 stated:

...Tenant funds will not be cited for base procurement of supplies or equipment. Material requisitions for tenants will normally be filled as for base organizations. AF Form 406, Miscellaneous Obligor Document will be issued charging the tenant allotment ledger, undelivered orders outstanding when: specific items requisitioned are not available in supply; host funds are not available for replenishment; and the tenant unit has been funded for the procurement. Simultaneously an AF Form 406 will be prepared and recorded as a reduction to UOO on the host allotment ledger in the like amount. This will provide host funds for citation of the document. To the extent that a host has not created valid obligations as of 30 June, these entries will be reversed. The material when received, will be carried through the inventory records and on a host-tenant billing listing. Tenants will be instructed to advise the commercial services area when items are received so that expenditure (tenant) and refund (host) documents may be recorded...

Finally in April 1964, with no relief in sight, 13th Air Force, 2d Air Division and Clark comptroller/material personnel met to attempt to devise a stop gap system to free the designated funds to 2d Air Division in order that the supply system could again get rolling. <sup>99</sup>

Col. Harold E. Walker, Director of Material, 2d Air Division stated that one-hundred per cent funding of Southeast Asia requirements was

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mandatory with 2d Air Division being charged with responsibility  
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 to assure funds were adequately controlled.

Billings by Clark were terminated as of 16 April 1964, thus releasing the 2d Air Division funds and other Objective Class Code (OCC) 2600 funds which remained were made available to Clark to build stocks for the benefit of organizations within the 13th Air Force. Southeast Asia units then received credit allowances in the amount of funds transferred to Clark. This temporary measure provided for maximum obligation of 13th Air Force 2600 funds, put supplies in the pipeline and assured 2d Air Division that high priority requisitions would be processed immediately, thus ending the critical funding and supply problems plaguing the Base Supply at Tan Son  
 101  
 Nhut and the two BEMOs in Thailand and Tan Son Nhut.

#### Transportation

##### Motor Vehicle

The lifeline of any well organized, well run organization is by necessity--transportation. An organization must depend on its vehicle fleet to operate on a 24 hour basis, seven days a week to support a combat mission such as that of the 2d Air Division. Without the required transportation much of the necessary priority work would be required to stand by and wait.

In Vietnam and Thailand, the vehicle situation had been termed  
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 as, "Pretty sorry" by both officers and airmen who were assigned to the Air Force mission in Southeast Asia. This was directly attributable to the condition of the vehicles when they arrived in

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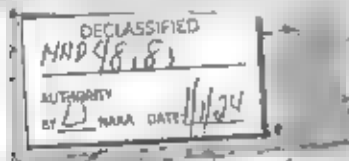
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Vietnam. Many of the vehicles that arrived in the last year had more than 60,000 miles recorded and two thirds of the vehicle life expended.  
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The entire problem was summed up by Col. Harold E. Walker, Director of Material, 2d Air Division. He said:  
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...The vehicle fleet and vehicle maintenance in SEA remain below acceptable standards although considerably improved over the past year. The unsatisfactory status is due to three prime factors: Inadequate manning; unsatisfactory supply support; and type and status of vehicle input. Initial manning in SEA was allegedly based on a concept that only service station maintenance would be performed; new or like-new vehicles would be input, operated until unservicable and then replaced. This concept sounds good but is completely unsatisfactory in practice. For satisfactory fleet operation, maintenance practices must conform to the normal proven procedures. Three of our four groups have been operating with less than 50 per cent of the required personnel, only the 23d Air Base Group being properly manned. The 33d Tactical Group, for example, based on vehicle equivalents, would have 45 maintenance personnel assigned. They currently have only 17 authorized and assigned. The 34th and 35th Tactical Groups are in approximately the same status. In addition, only one vehicle maintenance officer is authorized in all SEA, and this is a recently authorized addition to the 33d Tactical Group which will be filled in October 1964. One vehicle maintenance officer is required for each group. Supply support for the Vehicle fleet from the 405th Wing has been totally unsatisfactory. This is due primarily to the complete lack of funds from February through May 1964, and to the supply system itself, i.e., from the user to FB5250 (Clark), to GSA to contractor, back to GSA, to FB5250, and finally to the user. These factors, (lack of parts and personnel) have resulted in maintenance not being performed. This in turn results in a completely false picture of vehicle status in SEA, i.e., the condition codes reflected in the S-106 report does not present a true picture of fleet condition. Condition codes,

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A thru D are based on dollar expenditure in relationship to maximum repair allowance. Due to the lack of spare parts and maintenance personnel, only minimum maintenance has been accomplished to keep the fleet on the road, thus causing the fleet to deteriorate without the increase in expenditure necessary to change condition codes. This situation has been further aggravated by shipment of old vehicles to SEA. Many vehicles have been received with more than 60,000 miles recorded and two-thirds the vehicle life expended. This has been a subject of considerable correspondence between 2MDC and PACAF. PACAF has recently directed all Commands to ship only first-class vehicles to SEA...

In an attempt to alleviate all these conditions Colonel  
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Walker recommended the following actions:

- ...1. Establishment of a contract vehicle parts store for SEA at Travis AFB. (Proposal submitted to 13AF on 25 July 1964.)
2. Give SEA priority on replacement vehicles from new-buy programs, replacing A, B and C coded vehicles in the interest of economy.
3. Man SEA units to full authorization based on vehicle equivalents.
4. Establish a Redistribution and Marketing activity in Thailand.
5. Allow cannibalization from vehicles being shipped to R&M.
6. Establish an ISSA with HSAS for field maintenance of 33d Tactical Group general purpose vehicles. Contact has been made with the Navy in this regard. However, further negotiations are being held in abeyance pending expansion of HSAS maintenance area now under construction. If this agreement is consummated, it will negate requirement for a full complement of maintenance personnel and facilities for 33d Tactical Group.
7. Procurement of Military Designed series vehicles to replace the commercial inventory in certain categories such as the jeep station wagon or International Scout for sedans and pickups...

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Complaints on vehicle condition and problems did not come from Colonel Walker alone. Staff officers and unit commanders throughout Vietnam and Thailand complained of the serious effect the lack of reliable vehicles had on their particular missions. Maj. Raymond H. Kehl, commander of the 34th Tactical Group until May 1964 said:

...The vehicles on hand are very old and the wrong type for field use. Replacements are needed and should be tactical rather than commercial. Operation on unpaved surfaces causes light weight commercial vehicles to break down in a short time.

In comments regarding Major Kehl's statements, Col. Walker further remarked on the vehicle situation:

...The condition of vehicle fleet in Southeast Asia has been a subject of much effort by 2MDC. As a direct result of several personal letters, PACAF recently dispatched an All-Commands message with instructions to ship nothing less than the best to Southeast Asia, and stating that all future discrepancies will be reported and a possibility of disciplinary action being taken against violators of this new policy. Air Force current program is to buy commercial design vehicles; however, we have recommended consideration be given to assignment of tactical type vehicles. This position is under study at PACAF. They will need to sell it to Air Force before tactical vehicles can become a part of our inventory. The requirement for military design vehicles has also been presented to General Geraty's team.

The real vehicle problem seemed to point directly to Air Force procedures and programs for supply to units in the field. In Vietnam the Army and Navy seem to have more than enough vehicles to do the job, while Air Force personnel must stand in line to chance a staff car, or maybe a pick-up truck or just sit back and

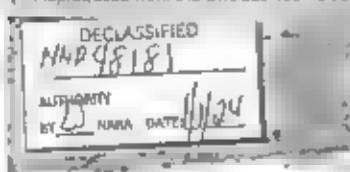
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have sufficient aircraft available to go out on it?":

He further commented on the "vehicle" problem in answer to

tation?":

personnel are like foreign citizens - they give Vietnamese almost



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portation. And we can't get any. I don't understand it. The Army seems to have plenty of transportation and the Navy seems to have plenty of transportation but the Air Force doesn't. They said the main reason is because they don't have anybody to take care of the vehicles, yet they are sending pick-ups in here with 60-67,000 miles on them when they get here. Well, no wonder they don't have enough mechanics to take care of them. They are wrecks when they get here. They're supposed to retire them I think at 72,000 miles and they are sending them in here with 67,000 miles on them when they get here instead of sending us new equipment. It doesn't eliminate the problem it just becomes part of it...

In answer to a third question on the vehicle problem,

"Would you say that this would be part of the Air Force Cost

Reduction program?", Major Saunders said:

...Well, I don't know, its beyond me what it is or what is the cause of it. It doesn't make sense from a standpoint of supporting a tactical operation engaging in warfare. I just don't understand it. It looks to me like for the want of a nail a shoe is lost...

At the end of June many of the 2d Air Division vehicles needed to be replaced and all indications were that the program was critical and the replacement of these vehicles was required in the interest of economy and mission support. The reflected percentages of vehicles recommended for replacement was indicated by the following figures:

Organization	No of Vehicles	Condition Code		
		A	B	C
33d Tac Gp	805	4%	4%	10%
35th Tac Gp	343	6%	1%	4%

In direct relationship to the recommended replacement figures, still more thought was given to fill authorized vehicles slots with new cars and trucks. The 33d Tac Gp was authorized

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presented a problem in maintaining the Saigon water

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 The Air Division had 833 vehicles and was in possession of only 805, with many of those ready for the scrap metal heap. The situation in Thailand was much more grave, with only 353 vehicles on hand of a 622 vehicle authorization and in the same condition, many of which were of almost no use whatsoever.

The personnel problem still plagued the transportation program in June 1964, by both the shortage of personnel, authorized and actually assigned in the vehicle maintenance area. Authorizations for vehicle maintenance personnel AFSC 471X0 were normally based on the number of vehicle equivalents supported by the host maintenance unit. These equivalents are assigned in accordance with AFM 66-12; and, although normally based on a 14:1 ratio, SEA was manned on a ratio of 17:1 (170 manhours per month). A closer study of personnel requirements in the transportation area was necessary. For example, there was only one vehicle maintenance officer authorized in 2d Air Division. Also, an increase in personnel was required to sustain the vehicle maintenance operation.

### Cargo Transportation

by the following factors:

Military air and sealift into Southeast Asia was generally quite satisfactory and adequate to meet mission requirements. Due to the rate of expansion, however, the airlift system had become saturated. 2d Air Division had requested an additional squadron of C-123 "Providers" and the request was approved. In the interim, C-130's filled the gap. The introduction of the A-1E aircraft with a concurrent fourfold increase in munitions requirements, presented a problem in munitions resupply through the Saigon water

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port. The MSTIS operation was effective, but the system broke down at the ammunition transfer point located at Nha Be.

Because of necessary restrictions, munitions were required to be off loaded at sea, this meant transfer from LSTS to barges. The barge operation was handled by civilian contractors with a security being provided by ARVN forces. The barges then proceeded up-river to Bien Hoa AB where the A-1E aircraft were located and the barges were required to stand off, as the beaching facility could handle only one barge at a time. Labor and ARVN security forces also have in the past caused serious delays. On each LST handled for Bien Hoa, the barge to shore time ran some five to eleven days, depending on the ammunition tonnage. In his end of tour report Colonel Harold E. Walker, Director of Materiel, 2d Air Division explained the problem:

...We have found it necessary to use priority airlift for essential munitions when ample supply was sitting on the barges. This unsatisfactory area has been reported to MACV J-4 for resolution...

#### Civil Engineering

Without a Civil Engineering facility in SEA the USAF mission could not operate. Construction of new U.S. utilized facilities was a must at almost every major base in SEA and without the necessary electric power which was unavailable through local RVN facilities, standard US equipment would have been almost completely useless. Through construction, the U.S. capability had increased and was continuing to increase.

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to a greater degree in June 1964. However, each of the new construction projects completed or planned required the prior approval of the Vietnamese government. With the increased use of U.S. aircraft in RVN, the American fire fighting and crash rescue procedures became more important each day.

#### Construction

The construction program in South Vietnam and Thailand under the USAF control was mainly for U.S. Air Force operated facilities. This included cantonment areas, power plants for electrical power, minor building construction, building repair, alteration and maintenance. The program was broken down into two fund categories, Operational Maintenance (O&M) construction and the Military Construction Program (MCP). The O&M program was for minor design, maintenance, alteration and construction (P458 and P478 funds) which amounted to less than \$25,000.00 per project. The P458 funds were based on a fiscal year planning program and were released quarterly. The P478 funds were for welfare facilities, such as volleyball courts, basketball courts, etc., and are issued through approval of the Central Base Welfare facilities. The MCP was an extension of the O&M program and used for larger construction with no ceiling on cost. The P341 funds for projects must be approved by congress and the MCP planning has a range of five years and funds are released as congress approves the programmed construction.

#### O&M Construction

Although insufficient records were on hand to correctly account for O&M construction prior to January 1964, under the new staff,

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correct and up to date records were being kept in June 1964. Each of the four groups in SEA utilized these funds for a total of 47 projects which amounted to \$363,800.00 between 1 Jan. and 30 Jun. 1964.

At Da Nang, the major O&M project during the reporting period was the building of a new feeder pipeline from an existing water well to the U.S. cantonment area. The project included extending the pipeline under roads and aircraft taxiways. The project, approved for construction in October 1963 was actually completed during the month of June 1964. The cost of the pipeline was \$24,500.00.

At Tan Son Nhut the major project of 12 was the drilling of a new water well for the support of the classified Lucky Dragon. The work, costing \$6,000.00 was performed by Raymond-Morrison-Knudsen, (RMK) contractors, in a matter of days. RMK construction is an American contractor in Vietnam, using U.S. heavy equipment with local labor. This contractor was used for all rush jobs because local contractors were unable to meet deadlines due to inferior workmanship and equipment. Using American equipment and U.S. supervision, RMK is capable of speedy acceptable finished products.

At Bien Hoa the major O&M project was the completion of a U.S. cantonment addition costing \$24,600.00. The program was approved in July 1963 and construction began in August 1963, with the finished accepted project in January 1964. This was one of 11 projects completed at Bien Hoa amounting to a total of \$74,400.00.

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At Don Muang, Thailand, the 35th Tactical Group completed fourteen projects under the O&M construction program with the alteration and air conditioning of the Don Muang Air Base Dispensary as the major project. The construction on the dispensary was \$10,000.00.

The O&M construction in 2d Air Division broken down by class was:

Class	Projects	Funds
Design P458/2521	6	\$ 18,500.00
Maintenance P458/2522	7	105,900.00
Alteration P458/2524	6	39,700.00
Construction P458/2525	26	185,200.00
Alteration P478/2524	1	10,000.00
Construction Nonappro/2525	1	4,600.00
Total	47	\$363,900.00

The same projects and funds expended by base were:

Base	Projects	Funds
Da Nang (23d ABGp)	10	\$ 48,700.00
Tan Son Nhut (33d Tac Gp)	12	128,900.00
Bien Hoa (34th Tac Gp)	11	74,400.00
Don Muang, Thailand (35th Tac Gp)	14	111,900.00
Total	47	\$363,900.00

#### Military Construction Program

Under the Military Construction Program the two major projects completed were power plants at Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut. At Tan Son Nhut the six 200 KW generator operation was one of five major projects undertaken at a cost of \$194,400.00. The

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new plant was built to give a KW output of 800 KW per day under a normal day to day operation. This allows one generator to be out for maintenance and one generator for back-up for generator failure or increased sudden power requirements. The actual plan design was completed by the U.S. Navy in January 1962 and construction began in February 1963, was completed in July 1964. The plant was 98 per cent finished at the end of the 30 Jun 64 reporting out of date.

Another power plant at Bien Hoa was completed under the MCP in May 1964. The design was completed by the Navy in January 1963 and construction began in July 1963. The total cost of the construction was \$48,700.00.

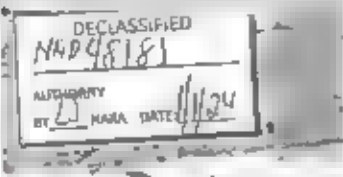
Total money spent under MCP in South Vietnam and Thailand in the 1 Jan-30 Jun 64 period were:

Military Construction Program (P431 Funds)		
Base	Project	Funds Expended
Tan Son Nhut (33d Tac Gp)		\$755,400.00
Bien Hoa (34th Tac Gp)		48,700.00
Total		\$804,100.00

Under the Military Construction Program five new major construction programs have been approved and are scheduled to begin in September 1964. The new construction includes five new power plants for U.S. facilities in both RVN and Thailand. The major project is an additional power plant at Tan Son Nhut, costing \$189,000.00. There will also be power plants built at Da Nang, Bien Hoa and two at Don Muang in Thailand. The funds to be expended

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to communication facilities, navaid equipment, operations controls, 128 radio sets, etc. etc.

By existing regulations it was required to maintain the primary power for these units plus a 200 per cent back-up.

In most cases, one unit required at least three generators.

The power requirement continued to increase because of expanding operations and the maintenance of the equipment was performed by U.S. military specialists. 2d Air Division, Director of Civil Engineering had two civilian contract representatives assigned to render assistance to the military maintenance personnel.

The maintenance and operation of the equipment resulted in many problem areas. Logistic support, as in every other area, proved to be one of the biggest problems, but with the institution of modified STAR procedures for all mission equipment this area had shown great improvement. Generally the generators in South Vietnam and Thailand was antiquated, with little life remaining, and coupled with constant maintenance and lack of supplies and spare parts became even more serious. The situation resulted in the cannibalization of parts and/or expensive airlift of replacement generators from 13th Air Force facilities.

One 150KW generator in support of project "Lucky Dragon", was on the line in excess of 1200 hours without as much as an oil change because no unit was available to relieve its burden, or provide down time for normal operators maintenance.

In Southeast Asia there were 180 generators assigned with the bulk being located at Tan Son Nhut (70) and Don Muang (50). There were 34 located at Bien Hoa and 26 more located at Da Nang.

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These stations all had generators positioned at other related sites as Plietu, Nha Trang, etc.

Due to the increased mission requirements, plans were already being prepared for increased power facilities and planned power requirements. At each of the main SEA bases, Tan Son Nhut, Don Muang, Bien Hoa, Ubon and Da Nang, requirements for KW have been established under maximum demand and future requirements have been planned. The present and future KW requirements are:

PRIMARY POWER SITES

Base	Current Max. Demand	Forecast Max. Demand
Don Muang	266KW	226KW
Ubon	150KW	378KW
Da Nang	276KW	357KW
Bien Hoa	298KW	375KW
Tan Son Nhut	962KW	1,617KW
Total	1,952KW	2,953KW

Crash Rescue and Fire Protection

In the counterinsurgency operation in RVN fire crash rescue was an important phase of the daily operation. All tactical type aircraft, as well as transient aircraft, were subject to enemy ground fire making the need for crash rescue ever so important. Adequate fire fighting equipment was authorized for SEA in both quality and quantity, yet the receipt of these vehicles through supply channels was extremely poor. Due to the inadequate shipment of vehicles to

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SEA, substitution was prevalent. Of the 75 crash and rescue vehicles authorized, only 10 pieces matched the authorization list and only 46 vehicles were assigned. This related a shortage of 26 vehicles in the theater.

Excluding the water distributors, which totaled nine vehicles, not one piece of equipment was under ten years old and in some cases much older. The terrain was such that the aged equipment suffered frequent breakdowns as the result of delicate, internal hose couplings being damaged. Supply of spare parts was relatively good with some cases being noted of resupply in a matter of only six days.

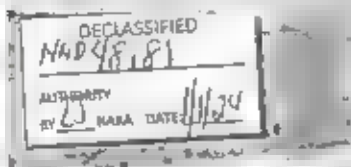
Fire/Crash Vehicles		
Base	Auth	Assign
Da Nang	14	11
Tan Son Nhut	21	15
Bien Hoa	19	10
Don Muang	21	13
Total	75	49

The assignment of firefighting personnel was excellent and 113 men were assigned over 109 authorizations within SEA.

Firefighting Personnel		
Base	Auth	Assign
Da Nang	20	23
Tan Son Nhut	31	33
Bien Hoa	23	23
Don Muang	35	34

Total assigned personnel 109

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# Personnel

The 2d Air Division was responsible for all Air Force personnel assigned in SEA excluding personnel assigned to units in MACV. On 15 May 1964 all personnel assigned to the U.S. Air Force Advisory Group in MAAG were reassigned from MACV to 2d Air Division to facilitate close working arrangements. On 15 July 1964 the former MAAG, redesignated as the Air Force Advisory Group, was physically moved to the 2d Air Division headquarters building at Tan Son Nhut.

In the personnel area, there were shortages in career fields, and there were overages in others. Many shortages had to be filled with TDY personnel from other commands, as far reaching as the eastern coastline of the United States. Other problems included personnel assignments on regular PEROS dates, lack of authorization to fill newly approved slots without changes in UMDS, lack of recreational facilities and recreation personnel and many others.

Many of these personnel problems resulted from changing requirements emanating from changes in the counterinsurgency war in South Vietnam. The U.S. personnel under 2d Air Division were all assigned to groups: 35th Tactical Group, Bangkok, Thailand; 33d Tactical Group at Tan Son Nhut, Saigon, Vietnam; 34th Tactical Group at Bien Hoa, Vietnam and the 23d Air Base Group at Da Nang, Vietnam, and the US Air Force Advisory Group located at 2d Air Division headquarters with units throughout Thailand and South Vietnam.

## Personnel Assignments

Generally the bulk of the personnel assigned to SEA were

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Many problems that have resulted were because requests for personnel

the words of Colonel<sup>1</sup> E. E. Flannigan, Director of Personnel for

stated in his end of tour report, "To my knowledge, we have never

personnel is just as vital to the mission as our requirements for

In some areas, the problem of assignment was the lack of

problems was in Airmunitions. The personnel assigned were highly

type of aircraft being used in SEA. Most of the munitions handlers

aircraft, and unqualified in the handling of conventional weapons.<sup>180</sup>

to train load teams and munitions handlers in SEA aircraft and weapons

not manned or equipped for such a training mission. Action, however;

in these munitions prior to departure for SVN. In reference to the

said.

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...Lt Sofie, recently assigned to the 34th Tactical Group as munitions officer, had received no prior formal training and had no experience in conventional munitions. All prior experience had been nuclear. As the munitions officer at a base handling thousands of tons of high explosives per month, his assignment to RVN represents a gross personnel error. Bien Hoa is also critically short of munitions handlers (461K0). Currently they have 27 authorized but only 10 assigned. An increased authorization to 47 has been requested for the increased A-1E requirement. Takhli is authorized eight and assigned three. Da Nang is authorized six and assigned 14, however, an increased authorization to 19 has been requested. Immediate personnel action is required in this area...

Much of the munitions handling shortage came from the new type aircraft being swept into the inventory because of the phase out of the T-28 and B-26, in greater numbers than ever before and capable of handling newer and more effective conventional weapons. The arrival of the A-1E Skyraider in Vietnam seemed to thin out the already critical munitions handling AFSC Air Force 137 wide

During the latter part of 1963 and the first six months of 1964, a new manual personnel accounting and control system was developed to report in-country manning and control of the assignment of personnel throughout 2d Air Division. After the development of the program, with a reasonable degree of accuracy, 2d Air Division was able to determine gains and losses and projected manning capabilities of each group. To meet changing mission requirements modified procedures for moving personnel from one location to another were developed. Previous to that time, considerable TDY funds were

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expended when personnel moved for an undetermined period of time. Some individuals were retained at new locations until the end of their tours, while others were rotated to and from permanently required positions at different locations, all on a TDY status. In June 1964, these individuals were being reassigned on permanent change of station orders.

Another problem that was prevalent and remained a serious obstacle in the 2d Air Division mission in Vietnam was the arrival of newly assigned personnel after the DEROS of the individual they were replacing. Because of the complexity of some jobs it was necessary to extend personnel past the 365th day in order to keep the position filled so that the mission could continue to operate smoothly in the combat area of Vietnam. In the enlisted ranks the turn over requires at least a 15 day overlap of the incoming and outgoing personnel.

However, in the key officer slots within SEA, a longer overlap was determined as a more important factor. Col. Harold E. Walker, Director of Materiel and acting Inspector General of 2d Air Division expressed his beliefs, saying:

In my own opinion, the one-year tour for key personnel is too short to permit effectiveness. The entire operation in Southeast Asia is extremely complicated. Command lines are confusing and inter-service relationships are even more confusing. From my experience, for a Director of Materiel, and probably more so for Operations, to gain a feeling of confidence and effectiveness requires at least 90 days. I strongly recommend that tours for key personnel be lengthened to not less than 18 months, and preferably two years, with or without families. This recommendation is made with full cognizance of the hardships

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ended when personnel moved to new assignments as to how personnel were involved. However, I think it is the key to success; and to achieve the only acceptable result—ultimate victory—such hardships must be endured...

Many of the newly assigned personnel to Vietnam were required to take a four month course in Vietnamese prior to departure for Vietnam itself. The school located in Washington D. C. provided a moderate speaking ability for all those who attended, yet most of the trained officers and airmen never are required to use it in their assigned missions. Col. Walker again pointed out his feelings on the school for newly assigned personnel:

...It is also time to take a good look at the CONUS training of personnel enroute to Vietnam. For example, I attended the four month Vietnamese Language Training Course, which proved of no value in any position. The four-month course is totally inadequate to provide a working knowledge of the language, and only personnel working directly with the Vietnamese need the knowledge. I'm sure that some other courses are of little value, although I do not have personal knowledge of these courses.

Going back to manning, although personnel officials had been constantly claimed that the command was never 100 per cent manned, figures of assigned strength and authorized UMD strength had shown a constant overage on the assigned column. This, however, did not reflect the true working requirement which existed in SEA. Before the cutback in December 1963, 4425 Air Force personnel were authorized in SEA. As of 1 Jan 64, there was a decided dip in authorized strength figures and an even more decided increase in June 1964 when U.S. strength in SEA

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was on the upswing once more. The figures below do not include

the many TDI personnel assigned to units within SEA.

Assigned/Authorized Strength SEA

1 Jan 64

	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Total</u>
Auth			4,187
Asgd	3,952	803	4,755

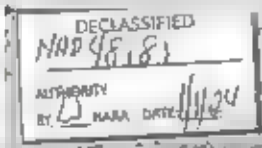
30 Jun 64

	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Total</u>
Auth	3,786	699	4,485
Asgd	4,308	797	5,105

In a "talking paper" to Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Gerrity, Hq. USAF, 2d Air Division attempted to relay some of the vital personnel problems confronting it in South Vietnam. Within personnel channels in SVN, the Commander 2d Air Division did not have the authority to permanently assign (PCA) an officer from one unit to another without prior approval of higher headquarters. This in effect, handicapped him at points of decision because of the placement of highly qualified personnel.

In February 1964, 2d Air Division proposed two items for consideration under Project ICE. The first, entitled, "Direct Personnel Support from Hq. PACAF," proposed direct personnel manning and manpower support for 2d Air Division assigned and attached units. This program if established would expedite decisions on personnel assignments, reassignments, and emergency manning assistance while eliminating a considerable amount of follow up actions and narrative justification to 405th Combat

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Support Group and 13th Air Force for additional resources. At the end of June 1964 manpower programs were being hand-carried direct to PACAF, but personnel actions continued to be handled and processed through channels. Project "Center Stage" was in effect 30 Jun 64 to provide direct communication between 2d Air Division and Hq. USAF on officer manning. The Director of Personnel, 2d Air Division, Col. R. E. Flannigan stated in reference to the proposal, "I believe direct support for Hq. PACAF for airman personnel is a logical solution for more expeditious actions."

A Centralized Base Personnel Office (CBPO) operated at Clark AFB and was charged with personnel administration responsibilities for 2d Air Division. The service rendered 2d Air Division was required to be sufficiently effective to provide timely information without queries or follow-up actions from 2d Air Division. In essence the existing system was required to be streamlined and simplified to the point where 2d Air Division received only information copies of actions taken and would act only in the event a reclama was appropriate. At the end of June 1964 this program had not been achieved and it remained necessary for 2d Air Division to monitor personnel assignments and manning to insure it had or obtained sufficient resources to accomplish each mission and task it was assigned.

#### DEROS Assignments

One of the biggest morale problems developed in SVN is the lack of assignments for personnel on their normal DEROS. This necessitates under present regulations that the individual must

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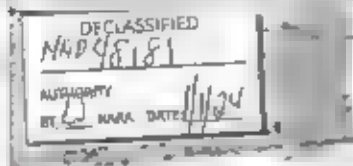
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be extended beyond his DEROS until an assignment is received in-  
country where competent orders can be published. Personnel assign-  
ment policies, publicity and individual counselling indicated Viet-  
nam returnees would be given priority consideration for assignment  
to jobs, bases and areas of their preference. Some individuals act-  
ually volunteered for Vietnam and others willingly accepted it in  
the belief one of their preferences would be honored. When they  
failed to receive a preference and requests were rejected, adverse  
morale was created not only for the individual but for all other  
personnel awaiting assignment orders.

This did not reflect only on enlisted personnel, but officers  
as well. Col. R. H. Flannigan, Director of Personnel, 2d Air  
Division pointed this out by saying:

...An outstanding example of the loss  
of talent to the Air Force is the  
retirement of Lt. Col. Kolman, because  
of the "needs" of the service. This  
officer requested the Air Force Academy,  
Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, and  
Ent AFB. He was selected for assignment to  
HQ USAF instead. After an unsuccessful  
appeal, he applied for retirement. Lt. Col.  
Kolman has served with distinction during  
his tour in Southeast Asia. Like most other  
personnel, he has shown selfless devotion  
and dedication to duty. After an assignment  
of this nature, he doesn't feel that he  
can make further personal sacrifices when  
he believes that requirements probably exist  
for his skill and grade at one of his  
preferences...

Colonel Flannigan continued in regards to personnel leaving  
the service because of inconsistencies in the  
assignment system. He pointed out that the  
assignment system is not working properly and  
that the personnel system cannot meet  
the needs of the Air Force.



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...Such apparent inconsistencies (publicity on preferences for Vietnam returnees versus actual examples from those who made their dissatisfaction known) will do more to drive good men out of the Air Force than all of the hardships and frustrations they encounter during this assignment...

The acting Inspector General, 2d Air Division commented on his findings resulting from lack of DEROS assignments on the 365th day of an individual's tour:

The most grossly unsatisfactory area in SEA is that of Personnel. This does not refer to the 2d Air Division Personnel Directorate, but to the entire Personnel system. Approximately 75 percent of the complaints I received in my additional duty as IG involved personnel actions, generally the lack of a replacement or lack of a CONUS assignment. It appears that the personnel system has become so automated and cumbersome that it is totally unresponsive...

At the 34th Tactical Group, Col. Benjamin S. Preston, Jr., commander, expressed his opinions of the same problem area:

...I've still got a bone to pick with personnel and the Air Transportation Control Officer (ATCO) though, because of the shiftless manner in which I think we've handled a lot of our people. This is not to imply a lack of responsibility or poor supervision by the individual officers themselves -- they are probably some of the hardest working officers we have. What I take exception to are the rules, regulations and policies which make the operation of both functions so inflexible and unresponsive to the ebb and flow of demand. For example, Airman X has a DEROS of July 1964. His replacement arrives early on 15 May. I release him for rotation at once because I don't have an extra bed on the place. He should be out of here and on a plane in 48 hours -- allowing for a little slack in the operation. It is at this point that the personnel system cannot meet the need. Airman X has to sit right here

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at Bien Hoa until his next base of assignment, can be determined before he can get orders to travel. Maybe this will only takes a week or two - it seems to take about 30 days, usually. Lets say he gets orders to travel by the first week in June - June the 8th. At this point, the ATCO part of the people handling system can meet the need. Already thoroughly browned off, Airman I then finds that ATCO will get him transportation back when he was originally scheduled to go, in July and not before. So, six weeks after the United States Air Force had no need for Airman I in Vietnam, he gets transportation back home. I just know I know how the system works.

Col. Preston went on to reason that the early release of an officer or airman wasn't important to the argument. The important thing was that 2d Air Division wasn't able to get the authority to ship him on his way without an assignment order, and even after he received such an order, ATCO wouldn't ship him until he was ready to rotate. Col. Preston related why these factors affected the poor morale of all concerned; ...As hard pressed as we are to provide food, shelter, and housing, it is inconceivable to me that we should put up with restrictions such as these. Ever since I've been in Vietnam, I've been trying to move people out. Good, well-trained airmen, from Airman First Class through Senior Master Sergeants - men with critical AFSC's. There are commanders in the States burning the midnight oil to barely scrape by for the lack of just a few scores of skilled men that I've had filling sandbags and doing stovedore jobs at one time or another, just to keep busy. A system which will allow waste of talent, creation of ill-will, and disaffection among our most skilled airmen is wrong. I've circulated among my men and kept in touch with them in my two jobs here in Vietnam. I'm not overstating the case. I've heard good men who have said "To hell with it" and gotten out. These

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men will work 18 hours a day over here, without complaining. They are away from their families and there's nothing else to do. It makes the time go by for them. As a group, they are far above average, because unskilled people aren't sent to Vietnam. These are really blue ribbon troops. When they get out of a job and aren't needed; and everybody knows they aren't needed; they lose self respect and eventually faith in the Air Force. Everyone tends to shrug their shoulders and say, "That's just the way the system works." I don't accept that. It is stupid and ridiculous to resist accommodation and change because "That's the way the system works."...

Colonel Preston made several recommendations for improvements in the personnel system which would promote better morale, and retain many of the top airmen and NCO's in the service. One of these recommendations was that a request be submitted for a waiver to the present policy that RVN returnees must have a unit assignment before starting travel. This is especially important when the situation requires unexpedited flow of personnel from Vietnam. He also recommended that Hq. USAF designate Travis AFB as a holding point, to further process and issue assignment orders to early returnees, as appropriate and necessary. It was also recommended that personnel released early for return to the US be provided air transportation within 48 hours after they have been released and processed for travel. Colonel Preston concluded his thoughts on

the personnel situation by saying... To those who take exception to these views as being extreme or unreasonable I would like to quote the following observation by George Bernard Shaw as food for thought:

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work hard to accomplish the job...  
 Personnel are eager, smart, and  
 other organization in the transmission or  
 that I have encountered in any  
 assigned to 2d Air Division far exceed

## Quality Control for Assignments

An effective quality control system for assignment of officers and airmen had not been developed within the CONUS in order to send only the right qualified personnel into Vietnam and Thailand. This can be seen with the assignment of the armament officer, already mentioned in this chapter, being assigned with no qualifications in conventional weapons of which he would handle exclusively in SEA. Transport and troop carrier pilots have been frequently selected by CONUS commands to fill requisitions for Forward Air Controllers. Selectees receive COIN training and limited L-19 transition prior to their assignment to 2d Air Division. Usually they did not possess sufficient tactical fighter experience, training or currency in techniques of tactical air employment to be effective and competent FACs. As previously mentioned from the airmen to the officer, qualified personnel in specific fields were mandatory and all training should have been performed in the CONUS prior to the individual's departure for SEA.

### Personnel Conduct

The morale, esprit, individual and collective contributions to 2d Air Division missions were exceptionally noteworthy. The efforts and devotion to duty were striking examples of the overall caliber

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of personnel selected for CCIN operations. In the words of Colonel  
R. E. Flannigan, Director of Personnel, 2d Air Division; 154

...In the vast majority the quality  
proficiency and dedication of personnel  
assigned to 2d Air Division far exceed  
that I have ever encountered in any  
other organization in the Air Force.  
Personnel are eager, aggressive and  
work hard to accomplish the job...

Colonel Flannigan continued by saying,

...The man who does not gain some  
self-satisfaction and sense of accom-  
plishment from an assignment to SEA  
will have contributed little to our  
mission or purpose for being here.  
True, we have a few malcontent and  
dissatisfied individuals, but they  
constitute only an insignificant  
(but vocal) minority...

Col. Harold E. Walker, Director of Material praised the  
improvement of personnel in Vietnam saying, "The NCO group, as  
a whole, is the finest I've ever worked with." With all the  
favorable comments in regards to personnel, it was determined  
that only certain areas of the personnel system were at fault. 155

#### Awards and Decorations

Although there were no records available for previous  
periods and a definite understanding that awards and decorations  
were being neglected for personnel in SEA, the awards system has  
greatly improved. An awards and decorations section was esta-  
blished to expedite the processing of back-logged awards and per-  
mitted rapid evaluation of each new recommendation. During the  
initial four months the section was established, 2,945 were processed

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as compared to 1,316 during the preceding eleven months. Pre-  
printed citations and narrative to accompany recommendations for  
the Air Medal were also developed. These reduced unit adminis-  
tration and processing workloads by 50 per cent, individually typed,  
error-free citations for each recommendation were no longer  
required. The awards and decorations programs throughout  
2d Air Division were effective and responsive since the Commander  
had been given authority to award the Bronze Star, Air Medal,  
AF Commendation Medal and Purple Heart. The significant improvement  
in the number and timeliness of awards was evident.

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Summary of Awards Processed 1 Jan-30 Jun-64

Award	Number of Awards Processed (by month)						Total
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	
AF Cross	2	2	1				5
Silver Star		5					5
Legion of Merit					6		6
DFC		4	53	55	14	9	135
Airman's Medal			9		2	3	14
Bronze Star	2		3		7	2	14
Air Medal	559	518	549	180	380	422	2,608
AFCM	4	7		31	87	1	130
Purple Heart	3	13	2	2	2	2	24
Totals	570	549	617	268	498	439	2,941

The large increase in Purple Hearts presented in February  
1964 was due to the bombing of the Capital Kihn Do Theater in  
Saigon when 10 Air Force personnel were wounded, one seriously.

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ion and one missing in action.

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## Communications

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2d ADVON, and later 2d Air Division. These communications consisted of a multitude of mobile vans deployed throughout SEA to provide voice and teletype communications and flight facilities for the increasing building of the USAF capability in SVN and Thailand.

It soon became apparent the 1st Mobile Communications Group capability was seriously hampered by the need to support increased air operations in the theater and plans were developed by USAF and PACAF to begin installing fixed facilities to support the USAF mission in Southeast Asia.

Early in 1962 PacComarea outlined the fixed communications requirements to support USAF operations in SEA and began programming fixed facilities. The heart of these plans included the installation of a 24-channel tropospheric scatter system between Saigon, Pleiku, Da Nang and Nha Trang in SVN and other SEA localities. This was given the name of "Back Porch" and provided for administrative and technical teletype and voice circuits between Saigon, Pleiku, Da Nang, Nha Trang and Bien Hoa, and was still the backbone of US operated and maintained communications systems in SEA in June 1964.

To operate and control these communications systems, the 1964th Communications Squadron was activated at Tan Son Nhut on 1 May 1962 and was assigned to the Southeastern Asia Communications Region. Immediately the 1964th Comm Sq took on the tremendous task of phasing out mobile facilities and operating and maintaining new facilities as they were installed. These facilities included

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administrative and tactical teletype relay centers at Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa, Da Nang, Pleiku and Nha Trang; administrative telephone systems at the same locations; and flight facilities capabilities at Tan Son Nhut and Pleiku. By late 1962 the 1964th Comm Sq grew from its initial one officer to 21 officers and 255 PCS airmen and TDY augmentation from the 1st MOB of four officers and 233 airmen. On 1 October 1962 the 1964th Comm Sq was redesignated the 1964th Communications Group.

The task of providing communications to support the USAF mission in SEA was so immense that six operating detachments were authorized for the unit, at Don Muang, Thailand, Ubon, Thailand, Bien Hoa, Pleiku and Nha Trang.

#### Telecommunications

##### Radio Operations

Radio operations provided tactical command control point-to-point and ground-to-air communications, back-up facilities for inter and intra-theater communications operated by other than 2d Air Division agencies, and provided procurement, installation and maintenance of non-tactical leased vehicular radios for 2d Air Division and subordinate units.

Radio operations included the PACAF Command Control SSB Radio Network provided control communications for CINCPACAF, subordinate commanders and selected aircraft. There were two stations in this network at Tan Son Nhut and at Don Muang.

Another radio network was the USAF Aeronautical stations at Tan Son Nhut and Don Muang which provided enroute and terminal

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HF Air/Ground Communications for aircraft operating in the Saigon and Bangkok Flight Information Regions. These stations relayed flight plans, clearances and enroute and terminal weather forecasts as well as providing liaison between MATS (Military Air Transport Service) aircraft and the MATS Far East Airlift Command Post. 167

Pilot-Tell network was a SEA tactical net which provided HF SSB communications between the Tan Son Nhut Combat Reporting Center and combat reporting points in Vietnam and Thailand. This network also provided ASOC's, ALO's and FAC's with communications with the AOC at Tan Son Nhut. 168

STARCOM back-up for DCA/STARCOM HF point-to-point SSB system to Saigon to Clark AB was available at Tan Son Nhut for emergency only. Another back-up system was Tropo-back-up which was established for the US Army SEA Tropo scatter communications system. 169

The Yankee Team network was established at Tan Son Nhut for voice communications HF SSB circuit between Tan Son Nhut and units of the 7th Fleet operating off the coast of Vietnam. This was utilized by the Navy Liaison Command Post at 2d Air Division. This network provided a direct phone patch capability between the Yankee Team Command Post and the Fleet Task Group, operating 24 hours a day. 170

Non-tactical leased radio systems established between January and June 1964 included fire crash systems at Pleiku, Da Nang, Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa and Nha Trang, base security at Da Nang and a maintenance expediter system at Pleiku. 171

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### Teletype Operations

There were five teletype operations centers at Tan Son Nhut and one at each of the six operating detachments. They are the Minor Relay station which passed messages via electrical communications facilities when no direct teletype communications were available, and as a transfer point for all Army traffic destined for Air Force units in SEA as well as all Air Force-originated traffic addressed to Army units in SEA.

172

Another is the Weather Relay station which relayed weather data to all Air Force locations in SEA and as the introductory point for all weather information compiled by the AWS detachment located at Tan Son Nhut. The MATS Communications Center provided instant communications facilities for all aircraft movement messages, and coordinated between MATS flight commanders and their parent units. The last of the teletype centers was in the Air Operations Communications Center which provided circuitry for transmission of all operations orders originated by AOC.

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2d Air Division

### Flight Facilities

Flight Facilities (FF) provided and operated NAVAIRS and ATC facilities and services in support of the 2d Air Division. It also provided approach control operations at Pleiku and GCA operations at Da Nang, Don Muang, Nha Trang and Tan Son Nhut. During the period 1 Jan-30 June 1964, 9,428 GCA approaches were conducted in SEA and 24,090 control tower approaches at Pleiku. These

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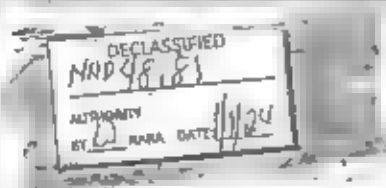
included 3,606 GCA approaches at Tan Son Nhut, 1978 at Don Muang, 1,581 at Pleiku, 671 at Nha Trang and 1,592 approaches at Da Nang. Sites at Bien Hoa and Can Tho have been programmed  
174  
for installation in late 1964 and early 1965.

#### Summary

Although the entire support situation was not at a completely satisfactory level, many changes which had been made had improved it from what it was in SEA in 1963. Pipeline time for priority items had reached a satisfactory level. With the institution of STAR procedures and AFM 66-1 maintenance procedures, the NORS and O/R rates on aircraft had jumped over an 80 per cent average for O/Rs and well below 5 per cent in NORS rates.

Funding was beginning to improve and although WRM was still inadequate, new procedures and planned construction of storage areas had been initiated.

Still a major problem was personnel assignment and reassignment but new programs and procedures were being initiated and although the manning was still not 100 per cent, the personnel assigned per requirements was improving.



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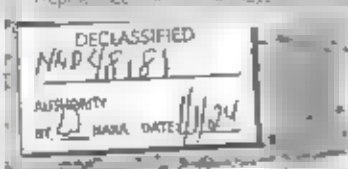
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Service aircraft or civilian contract carriers under contract to MATS. On 14 Oct 64 Col. B.H. Davidson, Director of Material, 2d Air Div, completed a study of measures which had been taken to protect and safeguard MATS and MATS contract carriers while at Tan Son Nhut. The study covered the practice of contracting for the services of foreign nationals. The investigation was made by Colonel Davidson along with the 50th District OSI; Commander, Det 2, 1503d ATW, MATS at Tan Son Nhut; Commander 8th Aerial Port Squadron; Director of Security and Law Enforcement, 2d Air Div; Transportation Officer, 2d Air Div and the OIE Security and Law Enforcement, 33d Tactical Group. <sup>135.</sup>

The investigation began 17 Sep 64 at the direction of Maj Gen Joseph H. Moore, commander 2d Air Div <sup>136.</sup> on four major areas of operation. General security, baggage handling, contract services for MATS aircraft and freight (hold baggage and military freight). It was found that in all four of the areas studied, the employment of Vietnamese Nationals was interwoven throughout the various aspects of USAF and American Flag Carrier operations at Tan Son Nhut. In regards to the study Colonel Davidson said: <sup>137.</sup>

"...The scope and complexity of operations by USAF and American Flag Carriers is such that we cannot extricate ourselves from this situation without considerable long range planning to develop a separate capability. Such a decision would be a radical departure from present concepts of operation and would probably require major policy decisions at the highest diplomatic, Department of Defense and National

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# GLOSSARY (Items not in Chapter I)

ADP	Automatic Data Processing
AFCS	Air Force Communications Service
AFM	Air Force Manual
AFSC	Air Force Specialty Code
AFSD	Air Force Supply Depot
AGE	Aerospace Ground Equipment
APRFE	Air Procurement Region Far East
ATCO	Air Transport Control Officer
A/M	Able Mable
AB	Air Base
ABGP	Air Base Group
AWS	Air Weather Service
BASO	Base Supply Officer
BEMO	Base Equipment Management Office
CAMRON	Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
CBPO	Centralized Base Personnel Office
DCA/STARCOM	Defense Communications Agency/Strategic Army Communications
DERCS	Date of Eligibility for Return From Overseas
ETA	Exception Time Accounting
FB-5269	Tan Son Nhut Base Supply
FF	Flight Facilities
FOL	Fuel, Oil, and Lubricants
FW	Fighter Wing
GCA	Ground Controlled Approach
GSA	Government Supply Agency
HF	High Frequency
ICE	Increased Combat Effectiveness
I33A	Interservice Supply Support Agreement
JU	Joint Utilized
KW	Kilowatt
LD/YT	Lucky Dragon/Yankee Team
LH	Lefthand
LST	Landing Ship Tank
MCP	Military Construction Program
MDC	Maintenance Data Collection
MCD	Miscellaneous Obligating Document
MSK	Mission Support Kit
MSTS	Military Sea Transport Service

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## GLOSSARY (Continued)

NAVAIDS	Navigation Aids
NCO	Non Commissioned Officer
NOBS	Not Operational Requiring Spares
NON APPBO	Non Appropriated
OCC	Objective Class Code
OCAMA	Ogden Air Materiel Area
O&M	Operational Maintenance
O/R	Operational Ready
PACVAN	Mobile Maintenance Van
PCA	Permanent Change of Assignment
PAC COM	Pacific Commander
QC	Quality Control
RH	Righthand
RAM	Redistribution and Marketing
R&R	Rest and Relaxation
SMAMA	Sacramento Air Materiel Area
SSB	Single Side Band
STAR	Speed Through Aerial Resupply
STARCOM	Strategic Army Communications
SVN	South Vietnam
TAC	Tactical
UMD	Unit Manning Document
UME	Unit Mission Equipment
WRM	War Readiness Material
ZI	Zone of Interior



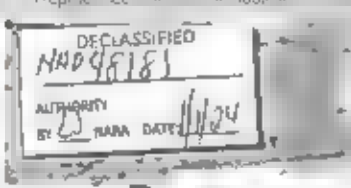
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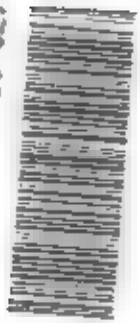
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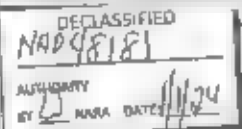
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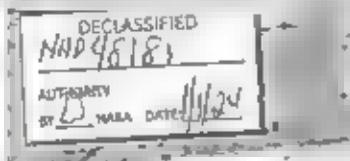
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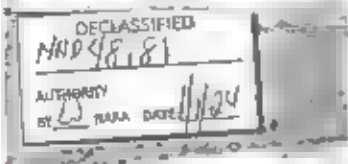


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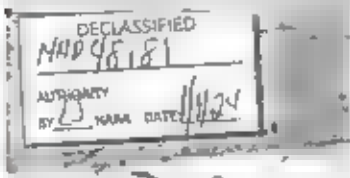
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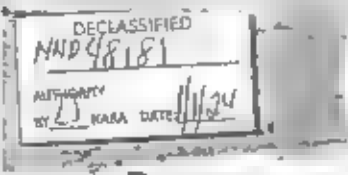
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## FOREWORD

This volume contains the 2d Air Division history for Support Activities and Organization in South East Asia for the period 1 July 1964 through 31 December 1964. It covers the support for USAF units in Southeast Asia including supply, maintenance, funding, civil engineering, personnel and communications. It also portrays the organizational build-up in both countries.

Assisting the writer in preparation of this volume were Mr. Kenneth Sams, 2d Air Division historian who gave valuable technical advice and assistance and SSgt Frank A. Green, SSgt Clarence E. Come and A1C Ernest Hernandez Jr. who provided assistance in research and administration. The writer also wishes to thank representatives from all 2d Air Division units and staff agencies who were most cooperative in providing necessary materiel to successfully complete this document.

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## Chapter I

### Support For USAF Units In SEA

#### Introduction

The Gulf of Tonkin incident between 3 and 5 Aug 64 caused a major build-up in Southeast Asia, almost doubling manpower requirements in the theater and resulting in emergency and expedited build-ups in all areas of logistical support.

The base supply function in South Vietnam saw an overwhelming increase in line items and transactions, and modified STAR procedures for peculiar aircraft parts proved satisfactory for the upkeep and operational readiness of USAF aircraft. Base Supply transactions increased to an oversaturated monthly total and new plans were put into effect to eliminate many of the supply problems. One of the main programs, in the planning stages at the end of 1964, was the forming of two new base supply functions, one at Bien Hoa in Vietnam and another at Don Muang in Thailand.

The vehicle situation was still a major problem at the end of December, but relief seemed to be in sight during the first six months of 1965. An increase in vehicle strength was already noticeable and the quality of vehicles received was improving. M-Series vehicles were replacing some vehicles in the theater and four-wheel drive on shelf stocked vehicles were replacing staff cars and pick-up trucks not suitable for use in a COIN environment. A big problem in the vehicle situation was maintenance supply support, and personnel shortages in the vehicle maintenance area.



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For the first time in more than a year, funding was no problem in Southeast Asia. Funds were being made available for every required and substantiated project.

One of the biggest increases in required support was Fuel, Oil and Lubricants, (FOL). With the increased air activity in South Vietnam and the contingency build-up in Thailand, fuel consumption increases were tremendous. With the implementation of jet aircraft into Southeast Asia as a result of the Tonkin Gulf incidents, consumption of JP-4, which had been moderate, jumped into the millions of gallons. Jet aircraft in the theater required hundreds of thousands of gallons of JP-4 storage and new liquid oxygen (LOX) plants at all available jet bases in both Thailand and South Vietnam.

As the use of airpower in South Vietnam continued to rise steadily in the last six months of 1964, the requirement for munitions increased accordingly. Storage area and delivery methods were inadequate and new weapons caused new supply problems. At the end of 1964, plans for a new "Floating Depot" program for munitions was being established which would solve most of the munitions storage and supply problems. New weapons were introduced into the inventory such as the 7.62 mini-gun for use on the A-1E and PC-47, the Lazy Dog MK-44, the Cluster Bomb Unit and the old and reliable Daisy Cutter.

One of the biggest aircraft increases in the theater was the contingency build-up of jet aircraft in August 1964. The F-100, F-102, B-57, and F-105 found their way into the Southeast Asia inventory and were for use in retaliatory strikes and air defense against the

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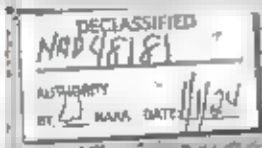
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North Vietnamese and the Communist Chinese. WORS, NORM and O/R rates were highly satisfactory for all major aircraft due to the success of modified STAR procedures, and the CAMRONS continued to function with the highest degree of operationally ready capability, including regularly assigned aircraft and transient aircraft.

The main headache throughout Southeast Asia was the civil engineering requirements at all bases. At a moment's notice, civil engineering units were required to undertake almost impossible deadlines to accommodate troops arriving almost without notice. With in-house labor and initiative, projects, although austere and inadequate for long period life, were completed and the mission was allowed to continue successfully. Completely undermanned and hampered by South Vietnam and Thailand siting regulations, the civil engineers in both countries did a fantastic job during the build-up and projects not foreseen in early 1965 further taxed their capabilities.

Personnel problems were ever increasing during the last six months of the year. Authorizations doubled, TDY personnel were rushed into the theater from all parts of the Pacific and the United States to temporarily fill positions until PCS personnel could be sent to the Far East. Problems noted in the first part of the year such as DEROS assignments and inter-command officer assignments seemed to be solved and new plans were being established for longer tours of duty for officer personnel in key slots, and a new CBPO for SEA. Awards and

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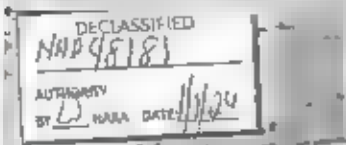
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decorations continued to rise in volume and the list of casualties in South Vietnam increased more than three times over the first half of the year.

In the communications, the contingency build-up caused a major shake-up in organizational outline which saw the 1964th Communications Group add a squadron and several detachments to its structure. A new command post was set up in 2d Air Division and more areas of communications were planned for the future.

The overall support situation vastly increased in complexity throughout South Vietnam and Thailand and the personnel assigned at the time felt the brunt of the build-up until new personnel and equipment arrived in the theater.

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Supply Support SEA

Supply support in Southeast Asia improved over the last six months of 1964. The build-up, as a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents, severely taxed War Readiness Material. By the end of December WRM stocks were being replenished although percentages of replenishment were still low. Base Supply at Tan Son Nhut, AB near Saigon had continued to grow during the last six months of 1964, and plans were in the mill at the end of the year for two new base supply functions, one at Bien Hoa AB, 17 miles north of Saigon, South Vietnam and the other at Don Muang AB in Thailand.

STAR Procedures

Modified STAR procedures during the last six months of 1964 reduced off the shelf pipeline time from 10 to 14 days if the item was available at Tan Son Nhut, the only supply center in Southeast Asia. The main pipeline problem was depot back orders which were mainly non-availability at that level. This was specifically noticeable with the A-1E Skyraider fill rate. The major reason for this was the fact that the aircraft was a Navy peculiar plane. As a result, new line items were being required every day. At the end of 1964, about 300 new line items were being added each month. A major factor related to the requirement for new line items was the age of the aircraft. The plane, built in the late 1940s, was just

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The base supply system located at Tan Son Nhut, was still the only supply agency servicing both South Vietnam and Thailand. As in previous months, an increase was noted in base supply activities as mission requirements in Southeast Asia continued to rise. At the end of June 1964, the base supply function at Tan Son Nhut had an estimated 22,000 line items on hand valued at \$4,300,000.00. At the end of December 1964, there were 23,400 line items on hand, an increase of some 1,400 types of equipment or supplies and the value of the items had increased to \$5.5 million, an increase of \$1.2 million dollars in only six months.<sup>2</sup>

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At Nha Trang, as a prelude to the assignment of a C-123 squadron there permanently, two supply personnel from the Tan Son Nhut base supply supported the self help kit which serviced C-123 aircraft attached to Nha Trang on a temporary duty status. In early 1965 it was expected that a squadron of C-123 aircraft would be assigned permanently to Nha Trang. At Don Muang, no supply personnel were assigned and TDY maintenance personnel from the 33rd CAMRON were responsible for the up-keep of the assigned self help kit. The kit at Nha Trang supports five TDY C-123 aircraft and five other aircraft on Operation Duck Hook, a classified project. The only other MSK located in SEA was at Bien Hoa supporting the A-1Es. This MSK was about 85 per cent complete and at least 10 additional MSKs were programmed for Bien Hoa for A-1E's. All regularly assigned MSKs at the end of December 1964 were supported by personnel assigned directly to the base supply function at Tan Son Nhut. All MSKs supporting high performance aircraft in South Vietnam and Thailand on a rotational basis were supported exclusively by parent units.<sup>3</sup>

The average number of transactions per month by the Tan Son Nhut base supply for the last six months of 1964 jumped from 20,000 a month in the first six months of the year to 24,250 per month. In the period 1 July to 31 December 1964, the base supply processed some 163,148 transactions about 4,500 a month more than the previous six months. In December, however, there were 33,600 transactions

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processed exceeding all other monthly totals, which totaled some 1,200 tons of supplies. These transactions were processed by 36 airmen, one officer and two local civilians, who made up the property accounting section of base supply. With the huge increase in the supply operation, backlogs were constant. The property accounting section completed almost all transactions on a manual basis and this manual transactions system was thoroughly oversaturated. As a result of the backlog, Maj. William F. Young, Base Supply Officer at Tan Son Nhut, stated:<sup>4</sup>

"...When you get into a backlog situation you violate the supply integrity and in December and November, we were in such a situation, which went right into the first of the year. If you can't up-date the cards you don't know what you have..."

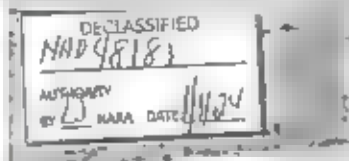
He continued by saying,

"...The only way to solve it, with the resources we had available, was overtime. We have had men working every day for over a month in November and December and on the days they had off then, they were on sandbag detail. The only way to solve it is with a substantial increase in manpower, but then we don't have the space to house more men..."

Major Young went on to say that ADP was anticipated to aid in the over-saturated system but was unable to say when it would be established. When asked what new procedures were established during the last six months of 1964, he said:<sup>5</sup>

"...One definite change which was very important to our mission was the elimination of the manual back order file and establishment of a one key punch operation.

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This gave us the ability to run a back order listing and know exactly what our status was. We began by running off the cards on IBM France machines and now we are using MACV facilities. It is really a time saver and was the most important change we could have made under our present facilities..."

Storage space for supplies was still a major problem and in the last six months of 1964 there was no new storage space built for the Tan Son Nhut base supply agency. At the end of December, however, two Butler buildings, which would give base supply two additional buildings, were on their way. Each is 40 x 100 feet providing 4,000 feet of floor space. These buildings were scheduled to arrive at Tan Son Nhut some time in March or April 1965. Supply requisitioning had not changed over the period with all supplies being requisitioned directly from the various depots. These included General Services Administration (GSA) for all local housekeeping items, Sacramento for STAR procedures items, and Warner Robins, Ga. for C-47 and C-54 parts.<sup>6</sup>

Another big project undertaken by base supply in the last six months of 1964 was the establishment of an excess program which began in November. In this program, all line items in the supply system that were not required to complete the mission were disposed of. At the end of December an average of 300 excess line items per month for two months had been discovered and eliminated. This resulted in a great saving to the Air Force.<sup>7</sup>

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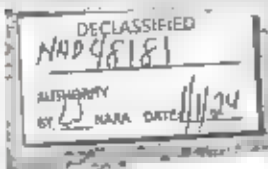
Some problems facing the base supply in the last six months of 1964 were explained by Maj. William F. Young, Base Supply Officer:<sup>8.</sup>

"...The big problem we have encountered and as far as I am concerned, is the one which we will be forced to live with, with little relief, is the failure to have adequate facilities and manpower to support such increased demands because of the Tonkin Gulf incident. Yes, our 20 TDY men, which we received in September, were vitally important to us and we could not have survived without them, but we still do not have the adequate facilities, nor do we have the manpower. This has caused us to oversaturate our system and force our men to work four and five hours over-time a day for days on end. With the new base supply function at Bien Hoa early this year (1965) and another at Don Muang, things should ease, and of course, we are expecting our two new Butler buildings which will give us some vitally needed floor space..."

When asked in an interview with a historical representative if problems were faced when the base supply requisitioned to the depot on modified STAR procedures items or Priority 2 items, he said:<sup>9.</sup>

"...Sometimes we do. Take the A-1E. It is a Navy peculiar bird and the Navy is also requisitioning parts. Our priority is a little higher because of the situation over here. On critical items at Alameda we don't necessarily get them off the shelf. If they are in short supply they go direct to the contractor for our parts. The only time we get regular resupply is when they are flush in a part or we need the part for MOBS. I have had one part on order for months, 300 of them. We finally had to go

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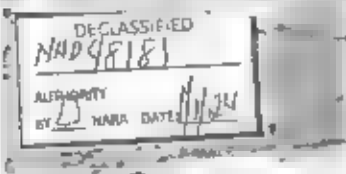
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out NOBS for 23 and we received 100. I really don't understand it, because if they sent us these extra 77 for stock, I wouldn't have had to NOBS 23. But that's the Navy for you..."

In actual base supply operations, many areas were increasing in effectiveness. In bench stocks a new high was achieved in December 1964 when 89.2 per cent of the requests were filled. In that month 2,167 requests were received and 1,886 filled. A previous high in effectiveness was achieved in April when 85.7 per cent of line items were filled from bench stocks. A high of 2,043 requests were filled in October, but a percentage rate of only 77.5 was achieved since 2,636 requests were received. The PACAF standard for bench stock effectiveness was 90 per cent. The lowest percentage rate was in September when only 1,494 requested items were filled of the 2,103 requested for a 71.0 fill rate. Base Supply's overall effectiveness was far below the acceptable rate set by PACAF, but because of the adverse conditions of supply storage, manpower, etc, it was understandable. In December, of 10,992 items requested only 4,885 could be supplied. The acceptable PACAF standard was 80 per cent and the Tan Son Nhut rate was at 47.7 per cent, the lowest at any time during the year. In July, however, a high for the year was reached when 3,443 items were issued for a 66.5 percentage. This surpassed a 66.4 total in March of 1964.<sup>10</sup>

It was anticipated that many of the base supply problems would be resolved in early 1965 when new base supply functions were scheduled

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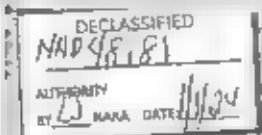
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for Bien Hoa and Don Muang. At the same time this would relieve the Tan Son Nhut supply of a serious backlog and enable Thailand and Bien Hoa to requisition directly to the depots in the United States. In reference to a base supply function for Don Muang in Bangkok, Thailand, Major A.C. McCulley, Director of Materiel, 35th TAC Gp said: <sup>11.</sup>

"...With the institution of a base supply account here in Bangkok for the 35th Tactical Group, we will become a more self sufficient combat support unit. We first began talking about this new proposed base supply function back in August last year, and we put the bug in enough-people's ear that finally around November PACAF came out and said they would give us a supply number and account which of course will be a limited supply agency. We won't be involved in aircraft spares and peculiar items to tenant organizations, etc. Just this afternoon we received our base supply numerical designation, FD5245. The big problem we have right now is siting the base supply. It was to have been in our new cantonment area but now that the space for the cantonment area has fallen through, we have to relocate the site for the base supply..."

Unlike Don Muang, the base supply function at Bien Hoa will requisition aircraft spares and peculiar items, and will become responsible for maintenance of its own MEKs. The entire base supply proposal will not only increase the effectiveness at each installation but will also make each base and area more self sufficient.

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War Readiness Materials (WRM)

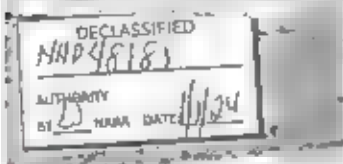
In August, as the result of the Tonkin Gulf incidents, WRM materials in Thailand and South Vietnam were greatly depleted in an effort to aid incoming units. As the result of the depletion of stocks, PACAF and 13th Air Force attended a WRM conference at 2d Air Division in late August where accounting and storage of WRM was discussed. In the same month instructions were issued to BEMO's at Don Muang and Tan Son Nhut to replenish their WRM stocks as soon as possible. At the end of December, although the stocks had not been completely filled, they were arriving regularly and the situation was improving steadily. All requisitions for WRM by the two BEMOs had been submitted by the end of November.<sup>12.</sup>

Approval was received for the construction of WRM storage at Don Muang consisting of 8,000 square feet of covered storage and 10,000 square feet of open secure storage. Although funded in 1964, construction had not commenced at the first of 1965 due to lack of siting permission from the Royal Thai Air Force. Approval of siting in late 1964 would have made the cost excessive, and after four months of debate with the RTAF, the program was still stalemated in Jan. 1965.<sup>13.</sup>

BEMO

Base Equipment Management Offices (BEMO) in both South Vietnam and Thailand were severely taxed by the Gulf of Tonkin incidents.

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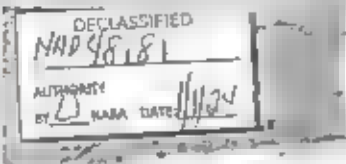
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but the general requirements were much the same as in the first six months of 1964. At Tan Son Nhut the BEMO account jumped from \$8,271,567 on 1 July 1964 to \$11,906,940 on 31 Dec. 64, as a result of the contingency build up.<sup>14</sup>

In Thailand, however, the BEMO had some major changes. Three new bases were included in the BEMO account: Udorn, 333d AB Sq; Nakham Phanom, originally a rescue unit and then increased with a radar squadron; and finally, Korat. There was no BEMO as such, at these installations, but a property accounting officer, who acted as a custodian for the base, or in effect was a BEMO liaison officer. Because of the increased workload in Thailand, due mainly to the increased contingency build-up, the original strength of 18 personnel was not sufficient to successfully complete the mission. A requirement was approved in November for 14 additional spaces and in December the strength was up to the authorized 32. As a result of the constantly increasing workload brought about by the Tonkin Gulf incidents, the BEMO at Don Muang requested an additional 18 spaces in December to bring the strength figure to 50. The authorization was approved at PACAF and was at AF for approval early in February 1965. The increased account realized by BEMO in Thailand was described by Capt. Jose E. Martinez, BEMO at Don Muang:<sup>15</sup>

"...It is difficult to operate an account which has grown in a six month period from eight million dollars to some twenty million dollars. On hand in June, I had

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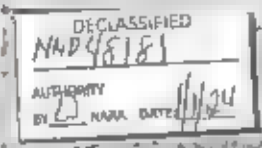
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four million dollars in equipment and in December I had thirteen million dollars in equipment on hand. With such a small force it is difficult to stay abreast, and you can only work it so many hours. I definitely believe that our own account or base supply will help the situation. As it is now, we get about a 35 per cent fill rate out of Clark and the same out of Tan Son Nhut. Our pipeline time, as we're not involved in aircraft spares, is 60-90 days from Tan Son Nhut and from Clark it is longer than that. With our own account we will be able to go directly to the buyer..."

#### Vehicles

A serious problem, though much relieved since 30 June 1964, was the vehicle situation in both Vietnam and Thailand. Although at the first of 1965 the problem seemed about to be solved, the situation remained critical. The contingency build-up in both Thailand and South Vietnam precluded any immediate relief, which at the time could have been solved with the receipt of new vehicles. As reported in the last 2d Air Div History, 1 Jan - 30 Jun 64, the vehicles received in Vietnam were old and ready for the "junk heap" when they arrived in Southeast Asia. In Saigon the situation remained the same. The US Navy had plenty of vehicles and transportation was readily available, while in the Air Force components, many times there was no transportation available whatsoever. At other times long waiting periods were involved.

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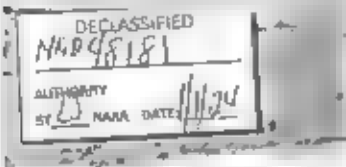
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~~SECRET~~Vehicle Strength and Status

At the end of December 1964, the 33d Tactical Group's authorized vehicle total was 833, the same as the 1 July 64 total. The 33d Tac Gp was accountable for all vehicles in South Vietnam. At the end of June 1964, only 805 of the 833 total were on hand while at the end of December, as a result of the continuous build-up in South Vietnam, 1,071 vehicles were on hand for use by US Air Force units in South Vietnam, but indications were that almost 40 per cent of the vehicles were on their way to the junk yard. Of these 40 per cent, 10 per cent were in Cat. "A" (ready for salvage), 10 per cent were in Cat. "B" (approximately six months driving life remaining) and 20 per cent in Cat. "C" (one year retainability).<sup>16</sup> This was a vast change from the 4 per cent Cat. "A", 4 per cent Cat. "B" and 10 per cent Cat. "C" at the end of June 1964.<sup>17</sup>

In Thailand, the status of vehicles was not as serious as in South Vietnam, although vehicles available in Thailand were not up to the assigned strength. At the end of December 643 vehicles were authorized for Air Force units in Thailand and only 564 were on hand. Of the total on hand, 5 per cent were in Cat. "A", 3 per cent in Cat. "B" and 10 per cent in Cat. "C". At the end of June 1964, Thailand was authorized 622 vehicles and had only 343 on hand. Of the on hand total at that time 6 per cent were in Cat. "A", 1 per cent in Cat. "B" and 4 per cent in Cat. "C".

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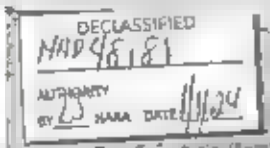
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A serious problem that faced motor pools at all bases in Thailand and South Vietnam was the lack of personnel in automotive maintenance fields and the lack of motor vehicle supplies. Regular service station maintenance was almost impossible and new vehicles were aging far before their time. This was the specific cause of many of the problems encountered in Thailand. The up-country roads were very seriously deteriorated and the vehicles used in that area suffered from the adverse conditions and the little or no maintenance increased the rate of aging of vehicles. This reduced their normal life span as much as 50 per cent in some cases. With the build-up in both South Vietnam and Thailand, the increased number of vehicles on hand, and the lack of qualified maintenance personnel, it was almost impossible to keep the vehicle fleet in full operation.<sup>19</sup>

This condition in Thailand was confirmed by the BEMO officer, 35th Tac Gp. He stated:

"...As of 30 June 1964, our vehicle authorizations were 622 with only 343 assigned. Of these assigned vehicles, six per cent were category "A", which in essence is ready for the junk heap, one per cent had less than six months to go in life span and four per cent were in category "C", with just over a year maintainability. Most of it is due to maintenance procedures here and road conditions. In Thailand maintenance is almost impossible because of the lack of qualified maintenance personnel, and up-country the roads

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are in terrible shape.  
In fact some near new vehicles  
are falling apart because of no  
normal service station maintenance..."

With the additional vehicles assigned to Thailand in the last  
six months of the year and the programmed increase in the first  
part of 1965, the situation was not improving and was expected to  
get worse.

Improvement of SEA Vehicle Status

In August 1964, Col. Harold E. Walker, then Director of Materiel,  
2d Air Div, suggested several new programs which might solve the  
vehicle situation in Southeast Asia. One of these suggestions was  
the procurement of military-designed series vehicles to replace  
the commercial inventory in certain categories such as the Jeep  
station wagon or International Scout for sedans and pick-ups.<sup>20</sup>  
On 4 Sept 64, 13th AF took notice of this recommendation and asked  
2d Air Div to re-evaluate the requirement for M-Series vehicles.  
13th Air Force stated that PACAF had indicated it would act on the  
request but felt that 100 per cent M-Series vehicles in Southeast  
Asia was not required.<sup>21</sup>

On 5 Sept 64, Col. B.H. Davidson, Director of Materiel, 2d Air  
Div, answered 13th AF stating that he was opposed to the recommendat-  
ion for a change-over to all M-Series vehicles. He stated:<sup>22</sup>

"...I have many years experienced in  
this area and it is my personal belief  
that M-Series vehicles are uneconomical

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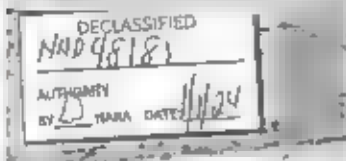
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and not required. I feel that the terminology M-Series vehicle is being mis-used or misunderstood. Colonel Walker proposed the procurement of military design vehicles to replace the commercial inventory in certain categories. M-Series alludes to World War II vintage type equipment. There are some commercial vehicles on the shelf which have the characteristics required of a military designed vehicle, such as ruggedness, 4-wheel drive, dual capability (pass and cargo carrier), water proof ignition system, etc. Off the shelf vehicles which do not meet the military specifications required for use in forward areas should not be procured to support a COM environment unless required modifications can be made. It is my opinion that a commercial vehicle which has the characteristics outlined above, will provide the flexibility desired and will provide the capability to support the Air Force mission in forward operating areas, where rugged terrain, weather and unimproved roads exist..."

Col. Davidson went on to list the vehicles which could be replaced by a more acceptable, commercial type vehicle. The colonel stated that while staff cars and station wagons are listed, main Air Force bases should have sedans for handling of VIP's, etc. However, forward areas and taxi fleets should be equipped with passenger carrying vehicles such as the Jeep station wagon, International Scout and Chevrolet Apache with collapsible rear seat. The various replacement vehicles listed by Colonel Davidson were:<sup>23</sup>

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### Present Type Vehicle

### Recommended Replacement

Sedan - Sta Wgn

Jeep Sta-Wgn, International Scout or Chevrolet Apache with 4-wheel drive, collapsible rear seat

1/4 T P/U 4x2, 3 Pax

Same as Above

1/2 T P/U 4x2, 3 Pax

Same as above or 3/4 T PU, 4x4, 3 pax Dodge Power Wagon

1/2 T P/U 4x2, 6 Pax

3/4 T P/U 4x4, 6 pax, Dodge Power Wagon

1 T Trk, Cargo S&amp;P

3/4 T or 1 T 4x4 Commercial Truck Dodge Power Wagon if available.

1 1/2 T Trk Cargo 4x2

2 1/2 T Trk 6x6 Commercial design

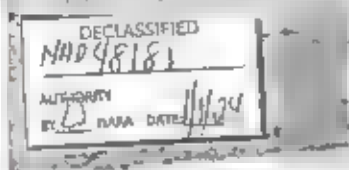
Trk Carryall, 4x2 7 pax

Chevrolet Apache

At the end of 1964 like-new and new vehicles were just beginning to arrive in the theater. As requested by the Director of Materiel, 2d Air Div, Col. B.H. Davidson, entire change-over to M-Series vehicles was not affected and only certain vehicles were being substituted as necessary.<sup>24</sup>

Another proposed program in the first six months of 1964 was the establishment of a Redistribution and Marketing facility in Thailand and allowing the cannibalization of vehicles prior to being shipped to R&M. Both of these programs were approved and put into effect in the last six months of 1964. On 4 Nov 64, 2d Air Div informed all subordinate units in Thailand and South Vietnam that PACAF had directed the all serviceable parts, good tires, etc.,

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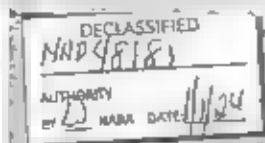
be removed from all vehicles prior to turn in to Redistribution and Marketing facilities. It was further recommended that each maintenance activity create "save" lists of items to be reclaimed. This would establish bench stocks on each item at each maintenance activity, whereas in the past no parts were available.<sup>25</sup>

On 14 Nov 64, 2d Air Div explained to 13th Air Force that a survey of all 2d Air Div activities indicated that the practice of stripping vehicles was already being done and that additional recommendations for cannibalization, when serviceable, should be put on permanent save lists. These were tires, batteries, starters, generators, carburetors, distributors, coils, voltage regulators, bulbs and any specially installed equipment.<sup>26</sup>

#### Motor Vehicle Improvement Program

A manpower package was developed to more realistically align requirements for vehicle maintenance personnel with total numbers of vehicle equivalents authorized. The philosophy supporting this program encompassed the establishment of field maintenance capabilities within all 2d Air Div units to replace the limited service station maintenance capability. The authorization for maintenance personnel at that time totaled 210 for all units. However, this figure was based on an out dated vehicle equivalent requirement which had been significantly increased as the SEA build-up progressed. Therefore, based upon the most recent figure of

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6,112.5 equivalents authorized, the personnel requirement had been increased to 592; accordingly, the new manpower package included a requirement for 382 additional maintenance spares. At the end of the year, no confirmation had been received of the assignment of the additional personnel.<sup>27</sup>

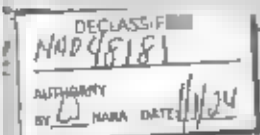
Negotiations were initiated with Hq Support Activity, Saigon (HSAS) for the establishment of the Interservice Support Agreement (ISSA) to provide field maintenance support to Air Force general purpose vehicles assigned to the 33d Tactical Group, Tan Son Nhut. The proposal was presented to HSAS on 28 Sept 64 and final approval had not been received 31 Dec 64. Final approval and implementation would eliminate the need for additional Air Force personnel for field maintenance and new facilities at Tan Son Nhut.<sup>28</sup>

#### Funding in Southeast Asia

Funding in Southeast Asia began to flow easily and without major difficulties in the last six months of 1964. Supply and maintenance found no barriers in funding since 13th Air Force at Clark Air Base, Philippine Islands fulfilled all funding as necessary in Vietnam and Thailand on justified requirements.

As a result of the Gulf of Tonkin attacks and the build-up of U.S. Forces in South Vietnam and the contingency build-up in Thailand, the FY 65 financial plan, originated in January 1964 underwent

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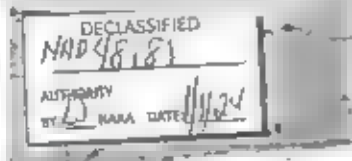
an immediate change. Funds had been allocated for some \$5 million and after the 5 Aug 64 attacks on the Gulf of Tonkin the Comptroller requested another \$2.5 million which was immediately granted. In late 1964 another large sum was required as the build-up continued and the South Vietnam war intensified. By 31 Dec 1964 the funding had reached \$9,817,800.00, almost twice the original figure. It was already being planned at the end of 1964 for the total to be supplemented again in early 1965.<sup>29.</sup>

Funds in Vietnam and Thailand are distributed quarterly by 19 objective class codes. Of these class codes, the biggest portion of the monies were spent on supplies and equipment followed by contractual services. In the last six months of 1964, \$1,838,532.40 had been paid out and another \$5,832,469.66 had been obligated.<sup>30.</sup>

Tenant units in Southeast Asia were supported with normal supplies and services, but funding for travel and items peculiar to their mission was provided through operations and maintenance (O&M) funds from their parent bases. Local national civilian employees were funded for these units through 2d Air Div with Aid in Kind (AIK) funds.<sup>31.</sup>

AIK funds were provided for 2d Air Div use by the Vietnamese Government for use in Vietnam. The program which began 1 July and was continuing at the end of December 1964, was a definite aid to the South Vietnam economic struture and also helped solve the U.S. gold flow problem. These funds, which were spent in Vietnamese

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piasters, were used to purchase in-country items for alteration and minor construction, maintenance and repair projects, payment of local foreign nationals employed by 2d Air Div and tenant units, leases of hotels and rentals, electricity, etc.<sup>32</sup> The main portion of the 77,264,357 piasters spent was for miscellaneous contracts for maintenance and repair in the amount of 8,163,902 \$VN.

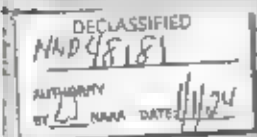
Another 12 million piasters was committed on 31 Dec 64 for contracts still not completed.<sup>33</sup> The AIK funds are allocated on a calendar year basis. For 1965, 110 million piasters had been programmed with changes in in-country buying to be established.

With the relief of an almost blank check, funding in Southeast Asia allowed the mission to flow smoothly and successfully for the first time in more than two years. Supplies and services felt no weight of the lack of funds and aircraft resupply funding was being awarded direct through the depot peculiar to the aircraft type. At the depot, increased funds were made available immediately as required by the buyer causing no delay in resupply.<sup>34</sup>

#### Fuel, Oil and Lubricants (FOL)

As US Air Force activities increased in Southeast Asia, new requirements were established for aviation gas and jet fuels in Thailand and South Vietnam. Extremely limited quantities of fuel were consumed in the first half of 1964 while in the final six months of the year, consumption rates jumped three times as far as

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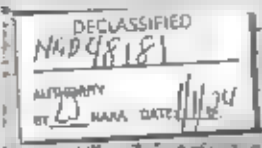
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AV-GAS was concerned in South Vietnam and JP-4 jet fuel rates of consumption grew to high levels. The new FOL requirements grew mainly because of the increased activity within the two countries as a result of the communist North Vietnam attacks on US ships in the Gulf of Tonkin in August and the retaliatory strikes by U.S. Naval aircraft. Increased storage facilities were needed, and immediately Tactical Air Field Dispensing Systems (TAFDS) were procured from all available sources to successfully satisfy requirements. As in the past, fuels were still being supplied by the sub-area petroleum offices of Vietnam and Thailand, and all fuels were being supplied by Esso, Shell and Cal-Tex.

#### Vietnam

A graphic indication of the increased air activity within Southeast Asia could be clearly seen in comparative consumption figures for AV-GAS and JP-4 jet fuel in South Vietnam. In the first half of 1964, jet usage in South Vietnam was limited. Esso provided JP-4 at Tan Son Nhut on a strictly contractor-to-plane service and a limited quantity was stored in bladders at Da Nang and Bien Hoa. Also, there was a limited amount of JP-4 at Nha Trang being supplied by the Army. In the first six months of the year, only 416,970 gallons of jet fuel was consumed by U.S. jets, whereas 16,373,483 gallons were used in the final six months. Most of the increase was caused by the contingency build-up of jet fighters and bombers in the theater. There

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was not such a high rate of increased consumption by regular AV-GAS using aircraft. In the first six months of the year, tactical fighter bombers, (T-28 and B-26) and transport aircraft used 3,780,396 gallons of 115/145 AV-GAS. In the final six months of the year, A-1E Skyraiders at Bien Hoa and transport aircraft of all types used 11,341,188 gallons, almost three times as much as for the previous six months.<sup>35</sup>

In South Vietnam, in the first six months of 1964, monthly consumption figures for AV-GAS were fairly normal, with the lowest monthly total for the period being 556,251 gallons and the largest 736,322. In the second half of the year the AV-GAS figures jumped to a minimum of 1,543,479 gallons in July and 2,820,509 gallons in August due to the immediate increase in air activity as the result of the Gulf of Tonkin attacks. Except for August, however, consumption rates stayed somewhat at a level, with the July total the low for a month and the September total of 1,831,574 the high.<sup>36</sup>

AV-GAS was used at six bases in South Vietnam including Tan Son Nhut, Da Nang, Nha Trang, Bien Hoa, Pleiku and Qui Nhon. USAF aircraft drew their fuel from Army storage at Qui Nhon Air Base. Contracts for AV-GAS were awarded only to Shell and Esso in South Vietnam. The latter maintained fuel supplies at TSN, Da Nang, Pleiku and for the Army at Qui Nhon. Shell maintained contracts at Nha Trang, and Bien Hoa. The only base which had contracts for into-plane service in South Vietnam was Tan Son Nhut as in the first six months of 1964.<sup>37</sup>

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The first real increase in the use of JP-4 in South Vietnam came in June 1964 when 262,627 gallons were consumed. The previous high was in May when 82,006 gallons were used. The next high usage total had been in March when 28,162 gallons were consumed. In July, 1,775,283 gallons of JP-4 were consumed while the figure jumped another million in August to 2,638,379 and still another half million in September. In September the monthly consumption rate was the highest one month total of the year 3,263,356 gallons. The steady increase of the JP-4 usage was as the result of B-57 bombers, F-100 and F-105 fighter bombers, and RF-101 reconnaissance fighters being used in the theater. The only noticeable change in the JP-4 usage was a reduced consumption of nearly a half a million gallons in November from 3,038,896 to 2,569,064. This was caused by the decreased usage of JP-4 at Bien Hoa as the result of the 1 Nov 64 mortar attack on that base. Consumption dropped from 704,771 gallons of the jet fuel to 257,420 when B-57 bombers stationed at Bien Hoa on a rotational TDY basis were evacuated to the Philippine Islands. Later ten of these bombers returned to Bien Hoa and the consumption rate rose again with 3,088,505 gallons used in December.<sup>38.</sup>

JP-4 was supplied to South Vietnam bases by Shell and Esso. Esso provides the valuable jet fuel to Tan Son Nhut and Da Nang and Shell continued to maintain the contract for JP-4 at Bien Hoa and Nha Trang, although at Nha Trang the Army owned all storage areas.<sup>39.</sup>

The monthly AV-GAS and JP-4 consumption totals in South Vietnam for the entire year of 1964 were:<sup>40.</sup>

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SVN AV-GAS/ JP-4 Consumption Jan-Jun 64

<u>Month</u>	<u>AV-GAS</u>	<u>JP-4</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jan 64	646,701	24,845	671,546
Feb 64	556,251	7,403	563,654
Mar 64	736,322	28,162	764,484
Apr 64	576,896	11,927	588,823
May 64	631,237	82,006	713,243
Jun 64	<u>632,989</u> 3,780,396	<u>262,627</u> 416,970	<u>895,616</u> 4,197,366

<u>Month</u>	<u>AV-GAS</u>	<u>JP-4</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jul 64	1,543,479	1,775,283	3,318,762
Aug 64	2,820,509	2,638,379	5,458,888
Sep 64	1,831,574	3,263,356	5,094,730
Oct 64	1,654,183	3,038,896	4,693,079
Nov 64	1,595,678	2,569,064	4,164,742
Dec 64	<u>1,763,111</u>	<u>3,088,505</u>	<u>4,851,616</u>
TOTALS	11,208,534	16,373,483	27,582,017

Vietnam Storage Facilities and Base Consumption

Storage facilities for aviation fuels at bases within the Republic of Vietnam varied. At Tan Son Nhut there were no storage facilities whatsoever, and all refueling was completed by the contractor, which was Esso, directly into-plane. This was for both tactical and transport aircraft and included both AV-GAS and JP-4.<sup>41</sup>

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However at year's end, plans were being made to service tactical aircraft with U.S. Air Force personnel and refueling rigs rather than contractor into-plane service. On 1 Dec 64, CINCPACAF had received concurrence on the establishment of USAF refueling capability at Tan Son Nhut.<sup>42</sup>

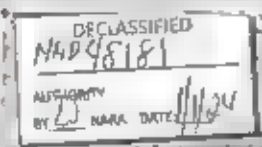
On 10 Dec 64, 2d Air Div instructed the 33rd Tac Gp that all tactical aircraft, i.e., F-102, F-100, F-101, B-66, B-57, F-105 and F-40 aircraft, would be serviced by USAF rig into-plane refueling. This required the 33d Tac Gp to obtain 10 refueling rigs and 20 fuel specialists, 63LED, all of whom were in place shortly after the first of 1965, at the direction of CINCPACAF.<sup>43</sup>

Plans for this new refueling procedure for tactical aircraft at Tan Son Nhut were originally discussed verbally with COMUSMACV and representatives from higher headquarters in Aug 64. The first official request for approval of the plan to place the ten F-6 refueling rigs in operation at Tan Son Nhut was submitted in Sept 64, and would affect only JP-4 service.<sup>44</sup> It was also planned that all transient tactical type aircraft, that were not on a tactical mission within South Vietnam, would be serviced by Esso into-plane refueling.

Plans called for the establishment of a military refueling capability at Tan Son Nhut by 1 Feb 65.<sup>45</sup>

On 9 Dec, the Director of Materiel, 2d Air Div, submitted manpower requirements for the 20 refueling specialists to operate the 10 rigs<sup>46</sup> and approval for the spaces had not been received on 31 Dec 64.<sup>47</sup>

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At Da Nang Tactical Airfield Dispensing Systems had been established for JP-4 in May and June 1964. One unit was comprised of a 10,000 gallon rubber bladder tank and in June two more tanks, one 10,000 and one 50,000 were filled with JP-4. In Sept 64, a complete TAFDS was put into service for JP-4. It was a 200,000 gallon capacity rubber bladder. At the same time two newly built permanent tanks at Da Nang with 315,000 gallon capacities were put into use. One was for JP-4 and the other for 115/145 AV-GAS. In October another TAFDS was put into service for JP-4 and an additional two 50,000-gallon bladders were being held in reserve if needed.<sup>48.</sup>

The reason for the large build-up of fuel storage at Da Nang was the possibility of increased F-105 and F-100 operations out of Da Nang and because all the fuel was carried by the contractor to Da Nang from the Lien Chieu Terminal some 21 miles away, refueling capabilities could be exhausted in a few short days. It was MACV's requirement that at least a 15-day level of JP-4 be maintained. The road from Lien Chieu was under VC control much of the time and could only be traveled during daylight hours. This was only refueling capability in the northern portion of South Vietnam.<sup>49.</sup>

In October storage facilities for fuel at Da Nang reached 315,000 gallons for 115/145 AV-GAS and 715,000 gallons for JP-4, an adequate 15-day storage for increased air activity.<sup>50.</sup> The increased use of JP-4 at Da Nang was reflected in 2d Air Div consumption figures for that base over the last six months of 1964. These

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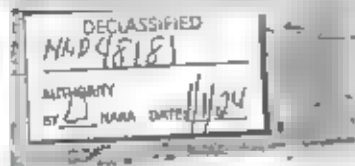
figures were to increase another 50 per cent in the first months of 1965.<sup>51.</sup>

Jul 64	411,100
Aug 64	663,746
Sep 64	779,912
Oct 64	904,358
Nov 64	864,570
Dec 64	1,058,068

At Bien Hoa, two underground 315,000-gallon tanks were in operation in May 1964 for 115/145 AV-GAS. Both were on loan from the VNAF. A TAFDS made up of three 50,000-gallon rubber bladder tanks, previously used for 115/145 AV-GAS were converted to JP-4 storage in June and as a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents and the deployment of B-57 Canberra jets to Bien Hoa, a second TAFDS was placed into service. This hydrant system brought the JP-4 capacity at Bien Hoa to 250,000 gallons.<sup>52.</sup>

One problem arising from the new large capacity of JP-4 required at Bien Hoa was the replenishment system. All replenishment of fuel at Bien Hoa, as well as Pleiku was resupplied from Nha Be and were carried to the bases by truck. As in Da Nang, if the road was out, there was no resupply. As of 31 Dec 64, no serious problem had developed but the VC could hamper delivery at will. The fuel was transported to Bien Hoa in 2,600 and 3,100 gallon truck rigs by Shell.<sup>53.</sup>

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Fuel consumption at Bien Hoa was slight in July. Only 5,640 gallons of JP-4 were used, but with the arrival of the B-57 jet bombers at the base, consumption immediately jumped to 531,306 gallons in August. The highest month for consumption was October with 704,771 gallons consumed. A heavy drop off in November was the result of U.S. Air Force withdrawal of most of the B-57s following the 1 Nov 64 Viet Cong mortar attack on the air base. As a result of the attack, only 257,420 gallons were used in November and 462,329 in December. Increased air activity in the first two months of 1965 did return consumption totals to higher levels.

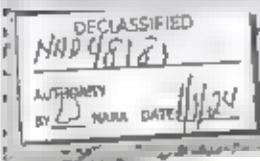
Fuel consumption by month for JP-4 and AV-GAS at Bien Hoa was:<sup>54.</sup>

	AV-GAS	JP-4
Jul 64	203,055	5,640
Aug 64	318,909	531,306
Sep 64	341,039	626,579
Oct 64	329,344	704,771
Nov 64	380,095	257,420
Dec 64	372,117	462,329

Until November 1964 all 115/145 AV-GAS was supplied to the Air Force at Nha Trang by the Army. It was soon learned that the Army was unable to provide necessary support to USAF aircraft using that base because of increased air activity. With the addition of the C-123 squadron to be assigned there, new storage facilities would have to be established.

In November, one complete TAFDS, consisting of four 50,000-gallon bladder tanks, was shipped to Nha Trang from Okinawa. Two of these tanks were put into operation at Nha Trang and the third was

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kept in reserve storage and the fourth transhipped to Bien Hoa where it was being held in reserve.<sup>56</sup>

At Nha Trang, very little JP-4 was used in the last six months of 1964. The most JP-4 consumed by the Air Force at that base in any one month was 28,967 gallons in Dec 64 and as little as 8,454 gallons in Jul 64. The highest total of 115/145 AV-GAS used in any one month at Nha Trang was 217,940 gallons in September. The low for the period was 161,607 gallons in July. Monthly totals for AV-GAS and JP-4 at Nha Trang were:<sup>57</sup>

<u>Month</u>	<u>AV-GAS</u>	<u>JP-4</u>
Jul 64	161,607	8,454
Aug 64	177,379	16,577
Sep 64	217,940	20,875
Oct 64	176,764	9,954
Nov 64	194,474	15,074
Dec 64	185,813	28,967

At Pleiku, storage facilities did not change in the last six months of 1964. Five 10,000-gallon rubber bladders were being used and one permanent 10,000 gallon tank, on loan from the VNAF serviced USAF aircraft with 11/145 AV-GAS. There was no requirement for JP-4 at Pleiku. As air activity increased, the Pleiku consumption of 115/145 increased. In August the lowest total for the six months was reported with only 18,349 gallons being consumed

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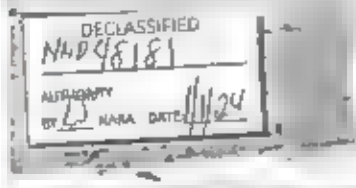
while 91,243 gallons was used in November. This total may have been the result of the flood relief program being conducted in central Vietnam.<sup>58.</sup>

The one big problem at Pleiku was the resupply of AV-GAS. All resupply to the central Vietnam base was done by truck, and as with Bien Hoa, Da Nang and other areas, when the Viet Cong decided to close the road or disrupt fuel resupply they could do it almost at will. Cases were reported several times in local Vietnamese newspapers of trucks being hi-jacked and disappearing. At night there was no resupply movement whatsoever over roads to Pleiku.<sup>59.</sup>

As shown in the previous historical report for 2d Air Div, 500-gallon portable bladders were procured for emergency use in case bases such as Pleiku were cut off by the VC. On 26 Dec 64 such a case developed when the road was cut off by the Viet Cong. Three USAF C-123 transports conducted three airlifts each on 26, 28 and 30 Dec to Pleiku from Da Nang where the 500 gallon bladders had been stored. Each aircraft had three bladders aboard and the total airlift was 6,732 gallons. Although this was not a practical airlift, it sometimes became necessary in order to carry out the mission successfully.<sup>60.</sup>

The USAF safety regulations have termed the bladders fully operational and of no danger while being airlifted full. After an aircraft gains altitude the pressurization begins to set in and the bladders begin to swell in size, and have caused some concern

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among crew members. It was explained to crew members that the bladders were built for airlift, that swelling could be expected, and that they were completely safe.<sup>61.</sup>

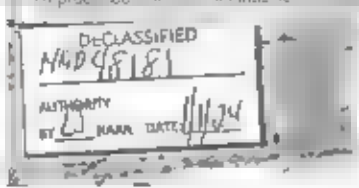
Pleiku consumption of AV-GAS for the last six months of 1964 was:<sup>62.</sup>

<u>Month</u>	<u>AV-GAS</u>
Jul 64	37,873
Aug 64	18,349
Sep 64	65,146
Oct 64	82,787
Nov 64	91,243
Dec 64	72,653

#### Thailand

The aircraft refueling at Thailand bases was not at all the same as in South Vietnam. There are no USAF storage facilities whatsoever in Thailand, except for 500-gallon rotational bladders at Nakhon Phanom. The entire refueling system was from Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) storage tanks or contractor into-plane refueling. At each of the bases in Thailand, except for Don Muang, the fuel was taken from RTAF tanks in USAF refueling rigs and then serviced into-planes. At Don Muang, however, all refueling was done contractor into-plane as at Tan Son Nhut except for tactical aircraft which were serviced by USAF rigs, as was planned

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for establishment at Tan Son Nhut. The remainder of the service to other jets and regular prop-driven aircraft were contractor into-plane. At Don Muang, Shell provided AV-GAS and Cal-Tex JP-4. At the remaining bases in Thailand, Esso provided AV-GAS to Udorn and Nakhon Phanom and JP-4 to Takhlī and Korat. Cal-Tex provided only AV-GAS to Korat and Shell provided JP-4 to Udorn, Ubon and Nakhon Phanom and AV-GAS to Takhlī.<sup>63</sup>

Plans were made in late 1964 for hydrant refueling systems to be available at several bases in Thailand. At the end of Dec 64, there were still no hydrant refueling systems in operation, but at Takhlī the system was scheduled to be operative by 1 Mar 65, and on 1 April 1965, systems at Korat and Udorn were scheduled to become operative.<sup>64</sup>

The contingency build-up in Thailand could be noted easily by the difference in JP-4 consumption rates in July and the last five months of the year. The same rate, although not as great was true for AV-GAS which jumped some 100,000 gallons in Aug 64. Only 454,993 gallons of JP-4 were used in Jun 64, but in Aug 64, after the Gulf of Tonkin attacks and the beginning of the contingency build-ups, JP-4 usage jumped to 1,299,384. The figure jumped 200,000 gallons in Sept 64 and another 200,000 in Nov 64 when a high for the year of 1,619,740 gallons was reached. Over the last six months of the year 7,789,069 gallons of JP-4 were used in Thailand. Except for the month of Jul 64 when only 177,653 gallons

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of AV-GAS were consumed in Thailand, the monthly figure ranged from a high of 276,612 gallons in Nov 64 to a low of 228,201 in Sep 64. The monthly figures for AV-GAS and JP-4 in Thailand were:

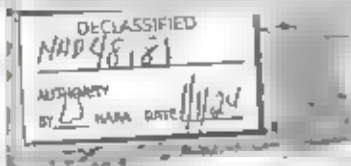
<u>Month</u>	<u>AV-GAS</u>	<u>JP-4</u>
Jul 64	177,653	454,993
Aug 64	274,237	1,299,384
Sep 64	228,201	1,439,964
Oct 64	268,603	1,412,943
Nov 64	276,612	1,619,740
Dec 64	257,892	1,562,045
Totals	1,483,198	7,789,069

The only problem of any consequence in POL at Thailand bases was the Royal Thai Air Force borrowing fuel and not repaying it to the U.S. The U.S. had no control of the fuel and RTAF was free to borrow at any time. The problem was solved satisfactorily except that fuel borrowed since that time had been paid back, but not at the borrowing station. This was the case of drawing fuel from an up-country base and returning it to the base nearest the port. This resulted in the U.S. having to pay the cost of the transportation of the additional fuel back to the borrowing station.<sup>66.</sup>

#### Liquid Oxygen

After the Gulf of Tonkin incidents, and the increased requirements for jets in Thailand and South Vietnam, there was an

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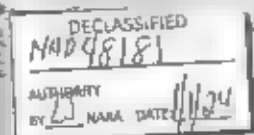
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immediate need for liquid oxygen (LOX) for all bases capable of handling the jet aircraft. In Aug 64 three LOX plants were in operation at both Tan Son Nhut and Don Muang. In July Da Nang received its first LOX plant and a second one in place in Sept 64. Bien Hoa received its first generator in Aug 64, and in the first part of 1965 installation of another plant was planned but it had not arrived. In Thailand, Takhli received a LOX plant in Sep 64 and like Bien Hoa, plans were in the mill to put another plant into operation in early 1965. Two more plants were being scheduled for Korat in Thailand, but the LOX site had not been completed by the first of the year and the plants were being held at Don Muang.<sup>67.</sup>

The only serious problem, other than the receipt of LOX plants for various bases, was experienced at Don Muang, Thailand. On 15 Dec 64 the LOX became contaminated and was out for 30 days. The investigation of the contamination revealed that the LOX was affected by hydrocarbon which had been caused by a siting error. The LOX plant had been built too close to refueling areas, run-up areas and runway ramps and the contaminated air caused hydrocarbon which in-turn contaminated the liquid. Action was taken to relocate the site and in the meantime two 1,000 increments, one from Clark and one from Tan Son Nhut, were airlifted to Don Muang. Takhli in the meantime provided the necessary LOX support for Korat which normally received its LOX from Don Muang.<sup>68.</sup>

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### Water Alcohol

Water alcohol for use at bases in South Vietnam and Thailand was prepared differently. In South Vietnam, the alcohol was provided to Esso by the Air Force and then Esso provided the water, mixed the ADI and serviced the aircraft, contractor into-plane at Tan Son Nhut. At the other bases throughout South Vietnam, the product was drummed and sent to Esso terminals for distribution to each base as required.<sup>69</sup>

In Thailand, water alcohol was provided completely by Esso. The Air Force, as in South Vietnam, did not provide any part of the product. The contractor provided into-plane service at Don Muang in Thailand and drum service to the remaining bases in the country.<sup>70</sup>

### Napalm Mix

At Bien Hoa Air Base, RVN, POL played an important part in the making of Napalm which was used against the Viet Cong by both USAF B-57 bombers and A-1E Skyraiders. In Jul 64 a 10,000-gallon rubber bladder, filled with regular automotive gasoline used to make the napalm mixture was positioned at Bien Hoa for this program. In Dec 64 the program was changed and the bladder was flushed and filled with JP-4 which was used in place of the automotive gas for making napalm. It was found that the use of JP-4 for the napalm mixture was far less expensive.<sup>71</sup>

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In the FOL area, no serious problems existed, but the contingency build-up as the result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents more than tripled the regular 11/145 AV-GAS consumption and JP-4 usage increased by millions of gallons. Storage areas were procured from every available source throughout PACAF and the fuel requirements as a result of the increased air activity caused by the Gulf of Tonkin incidents showed a still greater increase just after the first of 1965.

#### Munitions

Following normal operations in July, munitions usage made a monthly gain as the contingency and increased air operations widened. In South Vietnam, the arrival of more A-1H's for the Vietnamese Air Force and USAF A-1E aircraft at Bien Hoa, air operations increased all over South Vietnam. This was clearly evident from the monthly increase in tonnage expended. This increase was unusually high in early 1965 when the US and RVN fighter bombers went all out against the Viet Cong.

In July 1964, with the A-1E getting into the heart of the war, USAF aircraft dropped 513.5 tons of ordnance on Viet Cong targets. In the same month the VNAF expended another 531.8 tons of bombs and other ordnance for a total of 1,045.3 tons for the entire month. This total was the lowest for any month during the period

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1 Jul - 31 Dec 64. Every month the total munitions consumption figures steadily rose. In December the combined USAF/VNAF total had risen to 2,483.2 tons. In January and February of 1965, operations almost doubled as the combined air forces dumped 3,821.9 tons of ordnance on enemy targets in January and another 4,367.7 tons in February. Some of the increase in February was due to the first use of USAF jets in the South Vietnamese war 19 Feb 65.<sup>72.</sup>

In Dec 64 the USAF dropped 1,261 tons for the highest one month total in the last six months of 1964 while the VNAF dropped 1,222.2 tons the same month. Sep 64 was the only other month from Jul-Dec 64 that USAF aircraft expended more than 1,000 tons while Oct through Dec 64 VNAF expended 1,094; 1,137; and 1,222 tons respectively. In early 1965 the U.S. began to expend ordnance at a much more rapid rate, topping 2,100 tons in Jan 65 and more than 2,500 tons in Feb 65. The VNAF continued to expend and increased quantity of ammunition and bombs, dropping 1,675.8 tons in Jan 65 and 1,770.7 tons in Feb 65. Each month from Jul 64 the VNAF fighter bombers expended more munitions than the previous month. The monthly consumption rate for both USAF and VNAF aircraft was:<sup>73.</sup>

Munitions Consumption VNAF/USAF

<u>Month</u>	<u>VNAF</u>	<u>USAF</u>	<u>Total Tonnage</u>
Jul 64	531.8	513.5	1,045.3
Aug 64	630.02	629.9 <sup>5</sup>	1,259.9

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<u>Month</u>	<u>VNAF</u>	<u>USAF</u>	<u>Total Tonnage</u>
Sep 64	784.8	1,019.0	1,803.8
Oct 64	1,094.6	791.0	1,885.6
Nov 64	1,137.01	873.0	2,010.0
Dec 64	1,222.2	1,261.0	2,483.2
Jan 65	1,675.8	2,146.0	3,821.9
Feb 65	1,770.7	2,597.0	4,367.7
Totals	8,846.93	9,830.4	18,677.4

Total by pounds, 37,354,000.

#### Use of Napalm

Napalm became an important factor in the war in South Vietnam. Heavily wooded areas and great clusters of hutments and training shacks set up by Viet Cong troops were prime targets. With the use of napalm, pilots could successfully flush out an enemy who had tunneled deep into the ground, since napalm eats up oxygen and suffocates an entranced enemy. Early in 1964 napalm was used sparingly but use of the firebomb began to pick up in July. U.S. Air Force pilots used 542 napalm bombs in July, but VNAF pilots, still leary of its use, dropped only 40. U.S. totals continued to climb in August when A-1E Skyraiders dropped 796 napalm bombs and reached a high for the final six months of the year dropping 1,451 in September. In the last six months of the year saw U.S. aircraft drop more than 900 napalm bombs each month. The Vietnamese pilots first began using napalm to a significant degree in Nov 64

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when they dropped 371 Anti-Pam bombs followed by another 364 in Dec 64. U.S. pilots doubled their average napalm expenditure rate in Jan 65 dropping 1,819 of the fire bombs. Totals jumped another thousand in February as air activity in the South Vietnam war continued to increase. Although their increase was not as voluminous, VNAF pilots dropped 463 in January and 462 in February, their high for any single period since the war began.<sup>74.</sup>

The most widely used bombs during the last six months of 1964 in U.S. air operations was the 120-pound frag cluster and the 500 pound general purpose bomb. In the period Jul-Dec 64, U.S. aircraft dropped 4,681 (500 pound) bombs and 7,105 (120 pounds) frag clusters. They also dropped 5,639 napalm bombs. The VNAF, however, used the 100 pound general purpose bomb and the 260 pound frag bomb more effectively. The VNAF dropped 20,471 (100 pound) bombs and 12,213 (260 pound) frag bombs during that period. In Jan and Feb 65, U.S. aircraft increased their activity dropping 1,995 (500 pound) bombs in Jan 65 and 2,209 in Feb along with 2,012 (120 pound) frags in January and another 2,821 in Feb 65. This again indicated the continuing step-up in air activity in South Vietnam for both the USAF and VNAF.<sup>75.</sup>

With the phase out of the T-28 and B-26 in the first half of 1964 and the arrival of the A-1E and the increased strength in VNAF A-1Hs, consumption of the 20mm cannon shells increased greatly. At the end of the year U.S. aircraft were using more than 100,000

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20mm shells a month and the figure jumped to 337,771 in Jan 65 and 366,087 in Feb 65. The total quantity of 20mm used in Jan and Feb 65 was more than that for the period Jul-Dec 64 when U.S. aircraft used 680,457 rounds. In the last six months of the year, VNAF aircraft used a similar total, 676,711 and almost reached that mark in Jan and Feb 65, firing 232,071 and 270,381 respectively.  
 76.

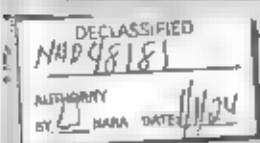
#### New Weapons

Many new weapons were introduced into the war in the last six months of the year, one being the 1,000-pound general purpose bomb. U.S. A-1E Skyraiders first dropped the 1,000 pound bomb in Nov 64, expending 24 and another 10 in December. This total jumped to 84 in Jan 65 although none were used in operations in Feb 65. The VNAF did not use the 1,000-pound bomb from Jul-Dec 64, but did use 16 of them in Jan 65. Another new weapon for the VNAF was the 750-pound bomb. The VNAF first used the weapons in Dec 64, dropping 12 and another 12 in Jan 65.  
 77.

#### (A-1E-Mini-gun-7.62mm)

During the last six months of the year two tests were conducted on the mini-gun, a 7.62 gatling gun that fires up to 9,000 rounds a minute. During the tests on the A-1E, three guns were made available and were highly successful. Two at a time were

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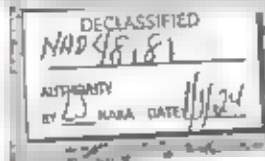
used on an A-1E and the third kept back in maintenance. It was determined that the weapon would be ideal for night fort defense, and 150 of the gun pods were ordered. It was determined that the A-1E would be configured for night aircraft alert with 12 mini-gun pods. Col. William Bethes, Commander 34th Tactical Group at Bien Hoa Base said:

"...Now, whether we fire all 12 of them or not, or fire six and then six more, which is more than likely the way I think it will be utilized, will remain to be seen after we have used this thing a while. I say the reason we will probably shoot six and six is that the max ammo capacity of this airplane only gives you 15 seconds of fire. If we use six and six, it will give us a total of 30 seconds of fire, each gun shooting 9,000 rounds per minute, will throw an awful lot of fire power. It will be the equivalent of a very accurately aimed Lazy Dog on any target we throw it on..."

#### FC-47

The mini-gun was tested again in Dec 64 on the C-47. In this test an additional six mini-gun pods were received and a team arrived from the U.S. to make the test. This test was called the FC-47 mission. The nine mini-gun pods were installed in three C-47s, set up to side fire out of the left side of the aircraft. This meant two guns would be fired out of open windows and the third out of the C-47 door. During the test operations the three guns were fired simultaneously by activation of a trigger on the right side of the pilot's control wheel. The pilot aimed the guns by

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using a gunsight set in his left cabin window and firing out toward the wing tip. Col William Bethea, commander of the 34th Tactical Group said of the test:

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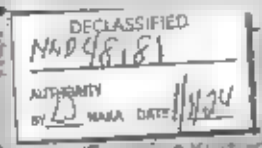
"...To fire these guns a pilot dip his wing toward the target and either keeping his wing tip, or actually the gun sight clipper, on the target, similarly in primary school you perform phylon-eights by skidding the aircraft or clipping it and firing in that direction. This allowed 27,000 rounds per minute to be thrown on a target. Up to this point we have discerned that the best utilization of this aircraft has been in night fort defense. At present the test is still under way and is approximately half finished..."

Another good point concerning the use of the mini-gun on a C-47 is the fact that the transport can stay on station for long periods of time and this makes it extremely effective on night fort defense seeing that the C-47 can still carry a considerable number of flares at the same time.

80.

The use of the mini-gun on the C-47 created an ability to track the target constantly for extended period, deliver more ordnance more accurately from greater slant ranges than by previous methods, (slant ranges have been proven out to 8,000 feet, and can be extended) and the range can be either altitude above the ground depending on the way the pilot flew his mission. One excellent

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capability was that the gun could be reloaded, malfunctions corrected, and firing patterns changed, etc., while over the target area. That enabled a multi-engine aircraft to carry a payload which would exceed 100,000 rounds and the C-47 would be allowed to hit several targets increasing its destructive capability. In the case of one 15-second burst from three mini-guns at a slant range of 3,000 to 5,000 feet, an area coverage of approximately 13,000 square yards was achieved with hits on more than 60 per cent of the dummies in the test area.  
81.

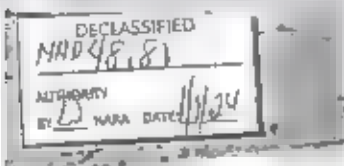
The PC-47 techniques provided the capability of hitting targets, which had been inaccessible to the strafing attack, such as steep mountain slopes, blind canyons, etc., and does not preclude the C-47 use for cargo delivery, reconnaissance, flare drops and troop carrying.  
82.

#### Lazy Dog MK-44

The MK-44 Lazy Dog missile was used in Vietnam for the first time in Oct 64. At this time, elements of the 34th Tactical Group at Bien Hoa dropped eight of the 500-pound Lazy Dog bombs on a proving ground, off the shore of South Vietnam. By doing this, pilots and observers could see how the pattern of the weapon would be if dispersed against the enemy.  
83.

The first actual employment of the Lazy Dog (Code name ELDA) was on 5 Jan 65 when eight A-1E Skyraiders flying in support of Hung Vuong 3 dispersed ELDA on enemy targets. Forward air controllers

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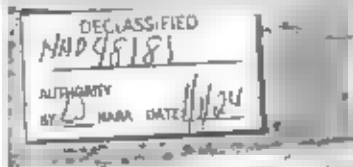
that after the first two ELDAs were dropped, ground fire in the area<sup>84.</sup> ceased. Actual results of the strike were not reported.

The MK-44 is a clam-shaped 500 pound weapon containing approximately 10,000 individual missiles which would be released, a few seconds after drop, by a time fuse. Having no explosive component the missiles would shower down over an area and the razor sharp fins of the MK-44 would tear into whatever it struck. Those projectiles which did not strike any target would stick in the ground and tear up tires of vehicles and feet of marching troops long after the weapon had been used. This weapon would have primary affect against gun emplacements, particularly .50 caliber machine guns, which were posing a serious threat to continued air and heli-borne operations. The MK-44 could be released at altitudes above the effective range of enemy fire. The use of the MK-44 was adopted after tests were made as the result of a study prepared<sup>85.</sup> by the Operations Analysis Division of Hq 2d Air Div.

#### CBU-2A/A, CBU/14 (Cluster Bomb Unit)

The newest of the weapons to be employed in the Air Force inventory in Southeast Asia was the CBU-2A/A or Cluster Bomb Unit. The CBU-2A/A anti-materiel munition was composed of the SUU-7A bomb dispenser and 406 BLU-3/B anti-materiel bomblets. The dispenser was a pod device carried externally on the outboard pylons of various tactical fighter aircraft. Deliver of the CBU-2A/A-BLU-3B bomblets was used on century series aircraft (F-100, F-101,

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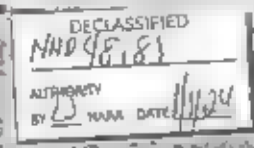
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F-105, etc.) or jet bombers and delivered at speeds of 350-600 knots, at an altitude above 50 feet. The dispenser has 19 thin-walled anodized aluminum tubes held in place by five aluminum bulkheads. The dispenser was cylindrically shaped, with conical nose and tail sections. Firing of the weapon was internally controlled in the aircraft. The dispenser was 118.42 inches long, 15.6 inches in diameter, with 14.0 inches between suspension slugs. It weighed 121 pounds empty. The 406 bomblets weighed 702.38 pounds making a total weight of the weapon 823.38 pounds.<sup>86.</sup>

The BLU-3/B anti-materiel bomb is 3.75 inches long, 2.75 inches in diameter, and weighs 1.73 pounds with 0.326 pounds of explosive. The 406 bombs in each dispenser are stored, shipped and delivered against targets from the original dispenser which is packed at the factory. The bomb arms itself after ejection and detonates upon contact with the ground. Its fragments have a high initial velocity of approximately 4,000 feet per second. The bomb is used mainly to defeat parked aircraft, truck convoys, troops, surface-to-air missile sites, and other light materiel targets. The target pattern has a dimension of 70 feet by 1,000 feet per tube. In normal delivery modes, the bomblets are dispersed simultaneously from two dispensers from opposite wing stations. This gives a pattern which is 100 feet wide and which varies in length depending on the ejection techniques used by the pilot. It is possible to get a pattern 100 feet wide and 19,000 feet long.<sup>87.</sup>

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88.

The lethal area of the BLU-3/B is:

Standing troops - 1,085 feet  
 Prone troops - 385 feet  
 Trucks - 620 feet  
 Parked aircraft - 2,040 feet

With these patterns, the CBU-24/A has the average probabilities  
 89.  
 of kills for a 95 per cent functioning rate:

	<u>3-Tube Mode</u>	<u>6-Tube Mode</u>
Trucks	.39	.60
Prone troops	.43	.63
Parked Aircraft	.89	.98

The CBU-2 was used for the first time 21 Dec 64 when F-100 aircraft participating in Barrel Roll II in Laos expended the weapon against enemy troops. There was no record of effectiveness  
 90.  
 of the weapon.

The CBU-14 or CBU/14/A dispenser is for the slower A-1E, B-26, T-28, A-1H, ect. It is made up of six aluminum tubes 73 inches long inserted in a 23 inch aluminum strongback. As in the CBU-2, it ejects its bomblets from the rear when fired. Gross weight of the weapons is 250 pounds when fully loaded with 114 BLU-3/B bomblets. One advantage is that this dispenser can be rigged prior to flight for single-tube or multiple rapid-ripple ejection. The CBU-14 had not been used in Southeast Asia as of 31 Dec 64 but it was expected that it would be added to the munitions  
 91.  
 inventory some time in early 1965.

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Daisy Cutter

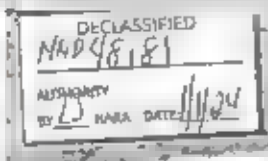
The Daisy Cutter is an old idea from WW-II and Korea which is being used again in South Vietnam. The use of general purpose type bombs often caused nothing more than a huge crater and a heavy concussion since the delay in the fusing mechanism caused the bomb to explode after penetration. Daisy Cutters were developed by adding a two-inch diameter pipe approximately two foot long to the nose section of the bomb. This, in a sense, fuses the bomb two feet before actual impact. This gives the general purpose bomb a fragmentation low to the ground, thus earning the name Daisy Cutter.<sup>92.</sup>

Ammunition Transportation

Two types of delivery packages are used in South Vietnam and Thailand for the replenishment of munitions.

In South Vietnam during the last six months of 1964 the same procedure was in effect as in the first half of the year. The munitions were moved from Subic Bay, P.I., to Nha Be, seven miles south of Saigon and to Da Nang by IST. At this point munitions transportation problems seemed to generate. The Saigon Transportation Terminal Command (STTC), a Vietnamese Army transportation organization, was responsible for: (1) scheduling and supervising all barge and truck movements incidental to handling of out munitions between Nha Be and Bien Hoa, (2) providing contractual services

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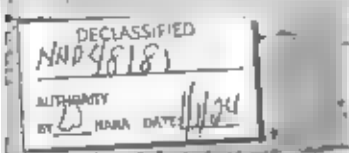
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and payment of fees incidental to trucking of ammunition from barge site to Bien Hoa and (3) coordinating security and escort activities with responsible ARVN agencies for all barge and highway movements from the Nha Be LST discharge point to Bien Hoa. The main shipping problem was the great difficulty in obtaining required support from local security elements of Bien Hoa Province, Cat Lai Arsenal, and the VNAP Air Base security force. This shortage of RVNAP personnel to accomplish the mission resulted in a backlog of 19 barges with USAF munitions aboard awaiting discharge on 31 Dec 64. Due to the step up in air activity with the widening of the war in South Vietnam in early 1965 the problem was under constant appraisal.

Because of the seriousness of the problem, 13th Air Force developed a "Forward Floating Depot" concept for the movement and storage munitions in Southeast Asia. This proposal involved the use of five C-2 Victory Ships on a contingency basis to completely by-pass the saturated docking and storage facilities at Subic Bay and Clark AB in the Philippines, and was intended to provide continuous vessel storage capability immediately adjacent to the two major locations in RVN, Bien Hoa and Da Nang, where COIN munitions were utilized.

The proposed Forward Floating Depot was concerned mainly with Farmgate (late to be called COIN) munitions at Bien Hoa and Da Nang, but the proposal could be modified to include similar situation

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such as the operational areas in Thailand, Philippines, Taiwan, etc. Military Assistance Programs could also be provided by the same immediate servicing. These procedures would be most practical where limited land storage exists and where the storage is inland. When the Jungle Jim deployment was made in 1961, munitions requirements were minimal, and further deployments to the end of Dec 64 changed the procedure only to the degree that a second LST had to be added to the Philippine-RVN munitions shuttle. By all original estimates, U.S. efforts in South Vietnam would not be required after 1965.

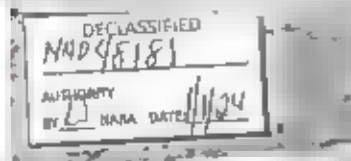
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At the end of 1964 this estimate did not appear valid.

Breaking down the problem of munitions bottlenecks, the Director of Materiel 2d Air Div had this to say about present procedures: 95.

"... It is mandatory to effect simplicity in the procedure. Cumbersome reporting and involved traffic movement must not be encountered. Middlemen must be eliminated where possible. A system free of administrative and physical bottlenecks must be maintained. To operate in the future under our present procedures is impossible from a physical standpoint. The present location of munitions support, is for the most part, out of reach of the user. The Philippine area is too far removed to render immediate or continuous support. Special airlift missions would be required to back up the saturated procedure. This to the detriment of all airlift users. The operational and reserve munitions must be readily available and always in a position to support a

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requirement at a different location. This proposal will provide that availability and mobility.

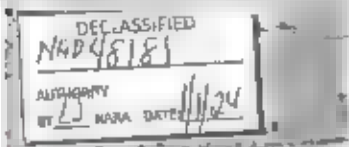
"Without a change in munitions movement, satisfactory support cannot be provided. The physical limitations of Subic Bay, are pier and terminal storage, overland transportation to and from Clark AB, storage facilities at Clark, and the physical limitation of munition control while in a transit status. Present manning at Clark AB munitions handling area allows an approximate support of 250 weight tons per day. This amount cannot provide the necessary munitions. Consider also the increased requirement levied on overland transportation. Fifty trailer loads per day 25 to 25 from Subic Bay. In addition to this functional area becoming saturated, the pier facilities at Subic Bay would also be overly congested..."

It was also determined that in addition to the inbound munitions on Military Sea Transportation Service and commercial vessels, six LST sailings per month would be necessary to shuttle the munition from Subic Bay to South Vietnam. Another problem at Subic Bay was Navy munitions priorities and the study explained these:

96.

"...Under the present agreement with the U.S. Navy at Subic Bay, those vessels which contain Naval munitions receive priority in discharge. Likewise, vessels which resupply the fleet are given priority over the Air Force per diem vessels now sailing. We have experienced this priority work schedule. LSTs were removed from the pier to accommodate a vessel concerned with

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Navy munitions. To provide the necessary Faragate support, such interruptions cannot be tolerated. In addition to the physical limitations, restrictions, etc., the administrative requirements, e.g., documentation, marking, stock records, etc, restrict the attempts to make the commodity immediately available...."

The method of supporting Faragate at the end of 1964 was to requisition the items through the munitions account, FK5225, at Clark AB, P.I. The requisitions were forwarded to the CONUS prime depot which in turn requisitioned from supplying agencies in the CONUS. The munitions, Class A, B and C, were forwarded to Concord Naval Weapons Station, Calif. while the inert materiel was directed to ports handling general cargo. The explosives were directed to Subic Bay and the inert through the primary port, Manila. All items were then transported to Clark AB by commercial carrier under contract to the U.S. Air Force. Based on the consumption data provided by 2d Air Div, the 13th AF Weapons Section initiated a shipping order to the 405th Fighter Wing and Clark. The materiel was then marked for shipment, documented and otherwise readied for shipment, transported to Subic, and loaded aboard an Air Force per diem LST.

Under the newly proposed procedure the Director of Materiel Study stated:

"...We would eliminate all of the actions at Subic Bay, Manila and 405 FW Clark AB. Except for Hq

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13AF action, Faragate in the Philippines area would be passed. The storage of reserve munitions is accomplished afloat rather than ashore. Multiple handlings are eliminated. All munitions become operational as well as reserve. This factor places at the users disposal four months of complete round munitions. The user will have flexibility in selection of weaponry not now available. Special airlift should be a totally unused mode. Always within thirty days the fifth month supply of munitions should be available..."

99.

The study also stated:

"...Our procedure provided the availability at a lesser cost to the government in dollar expenditure and at a much reduced Gold Flow. Based upon all known factors of present costs and those projected, without guestimating manpower fluctuations, we can identify a savings of \$215,751 per annum. A savings in Gold Flow of \$1,369,615 would be occasioned. In developing the cost factors present routing and primary ports were considered for the commodity concerned..."

After reviewing all possible procedures to correct the problem another way, the "Forward Floating Depot" seemed to be the logical solution. Equipment needed would be five Victory (C-2) ships, five LCM-9 landing ships, commercial overland transportation, a RVN munitions supply account, approval to use CAT Lai

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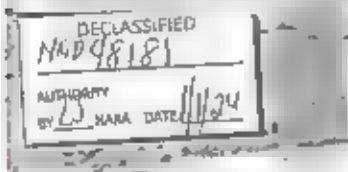
Dock/seaplane ramp and convoy security from Cat Lai to the Bien Hoa Highway. The C-2 vessel or Victory Ship is a basic cargo vessel and has an 11,400 measurement ton (M/T) capacity which is capable of satisfying the one month Faragate requirement of 7,563 M/T. The LCM-8 is basically a harbor or sheltered waterway craft, which is specifically what is needed in South Vietnam. The maximum draft is 5 feet 2 inches and can accommodate two 2½ ton 6x6 trucks or any combination of vehicle/vehicles to 44 feet length. It is also a beaching craft. Trucks having carrying capacities of not more than 5-6 tons are recommended because of the limited weight capacities of bridges between Cat Lai and the Bien Hoa highway. The proposal maintained that it is more practical to store operational/reserve munitions aboard vessels in that capacity than to project six month reserve storage on land and one month operational stock levels at the destinations.

Each C-2 Victory Ship is capable of handling one month's requirement for ammunition in South Vietnam as set in PACAF Letter 136-2, dated 1 Jun 64.

Each ship can carry the one month requirement, 3,449 short tons (2,000 pounds), 7,593 measurement tons (40 cubic feet). The five vessels would operate in progressive positions, 30 days apart.

- A. Nha Be.
- B. Da Nang
- C. Anchorage - Subic Bay
- D. Loading and sailing from Concord Naval Weapons Station, Concordia, Calif.

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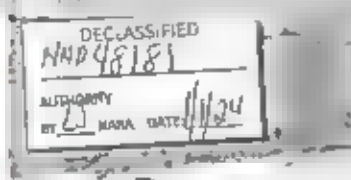
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# E. Sailing from Nha Be and loading at Concord.

Each vessel would carry complete components. Except for the land dump at Da Nang and Bien Hoa, all munitions are available to any location. The original and subsequent package for each vessel would be developed by the munitions account, RVN, 2d Air Div and 13th AF munitions personnel. The requisitions would be forwarded to the CONUS prime depot (Ogden) who would initiate and monitor the requisitions in the CONUS. All material, inert and explosive would be directed for movement into Concord NWS. 101.

The vessel discharge at Nha Be would be into trucks which are in place aboard the LCM-9s. Then the LCMs would proceed to Cat Lai where the trucks would roll off and assemble for convoy to Bien Hoa. It is possible that at times there would not be a complete issue of all munitions from a vessel during a 30 day period. There are three workable and acceptable methods to handle such a situation. Depending upon the overall situation, the munitions could be (1) force fed to a land dump, (2) issued to MAP or (3) left aboard the vessel with subsequent reduction of requirements from the ZI. The system is replete with advantages over the program operating at the end of 1964. It provides immediate reaction to requirements within 48 hours. It eliminates the congestion and multiple handling at Subic Bay and Clark AB, is flexible and mobile, which is a major advantage in a changing consumption criteria. It also

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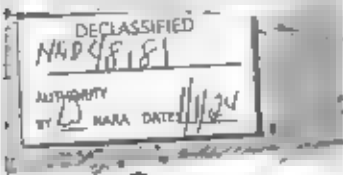
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provides for availability of munitions at any point in Southeast Asia, with land dumps making munitions available at Bien Hoa and Da Nang and floating depots are located at Nha Be, Da Nang and Subic Bay. It would relieve Clark and Subic of the responsibility of handling the munitions in addition to the other weaponry involved, reduces the Gold Flow, real estate and facilities for storage would be eliminated or lessened, and due to the immediate availability and the mobility of the vessel, the inventory reserve, can be reduced by two or three months. It would make the present facilities, storage and transportation available to perform other functions. It would also make the munitions aboard the vessels relatively secure from sabotage. The commodity involved would be in constant movement/rotation thereby providing reliable new stock rather than deteriorated ground tropic stored munitions. 102.

#### Thailand Munitions Delivery

All munitions brought into Thailand during the last six months of 1964 were by sea and by air. Those brought in by air were flown directly to usage points while all sea arriving ammo was shipped to the using area by Thailand originated air or truck, depending on the feasibility. The main problem in Thailand was storage areas for the ammunition for which a shortage exists at all bases. There were practically no facilities and where they did exist, they were much too small. 103.

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Another problem was the storage and issuance of all U.S. weapons, which was under the complete control of the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) which retained all keys, etc. Thus for no problem had been actually realized. The one problem which has occurred to U.S. officials in Thailand was the control of classified weapons which might be brought into the theater.

There were limited storage areas at Takhli, Korat, Udorn, Ubon and Nakhon Phanom at the end of 1964. Revetments had been established for more than a year at Korat, and the Takhli revetments were begun in late 1964 and were scheduled to be completed in early 1965. Ammunition supplied in Thailand was for F-102s, F-100s, F-105s, B-57s, T-28s.

#### Aircraft and Maintenance

As the requirement for air activity increased in South Vietnam, the A-1E Skyraider became an important element in the South Vietnamese effort to subdue the Communist Viet Cong. With T-28s and B-26s completely gone from the South Vietnamese conflict, except for Water Pump T-28s in Thailand, the A-1E became the only strike aircraft flown by the U.S. in South Vietnam. Under the contingency build-up in Southeast Asia, century series fighter aircraft became an everyday sight flying over South Vietnamese cities and rural areas. New requirements for maintenance and upkeep of the U.S. air arm were generated. Not only did the number of tactical fighters increase, both conventional and century series, but also the number

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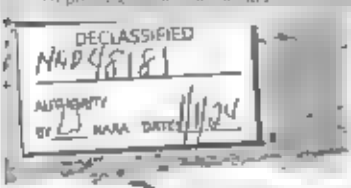
61

of C-123 Providers jumped some 50 per cent as air resupply became more important as the war in Vietnam continued.

In Jul 64 there were only 15 A-1E Skyraiders at Bien Hoa, but the figure jumped to almost double the following month and stood at 48 of a programmed 50 by the end of Dec 64. A reason for the sub-required total was due to the loss of eight A-1E's in aircraft accidents and combat losses from Aug to Nov 64. All the A-1E Skyraiders were located at Bien Hoa Air Base, some 17 miles northwest of Saigon. They were flown by American pilots with Vietnamese student pilots as observers.

Jet aircraft began appearing in late Jun 64, but in July they first began to arrive in numbers in the Republic of Vietnam and Thailand. The first important arrival was the F-102 Delta Dagger which was brought into Southeast Asia as an air defense weapon to assist both South Vietnam and Thailand defend their boundaries against aggression in the form of air attacks by North Vietnam and Communist China. Another important phase in the contingency build-up was the inclusion of the F-100 and F-105 fighter bombers among the aircraft in the theater providing a retaliatory strike capability if it became necessary. Both these aircraft, along with the arrival of the B-57 Canberra jet bomber into South Vietnam, posed a strong threat against the Communist North's increased aggression in the South.

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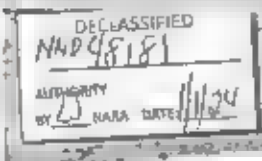


Aircraft Assets

Bien Hoa

The A-1E became a permanent fixture at Bien Hoa Air Base, the only major tactical Air Base in South Vietnam other than Da Nang 350 miles north of Saigon. At Bien Hoa early in Jul 64, the last remaining T-28's were seen in storage areas just off the parking ramp while the ever powerful A-1E, capable of carrying some 7,500 pounds of ordnance, combined forces with the A-1H of the Vietnamese Air Force in the struggle against the Viet Cong. The first 15 A-1E's available at Bien Hoa during Jul 64 were the nucleus of two A-1E squadrons of 25 aircraft each, both under the 34th Tactical Group. In August the 34th Tac Gp A-1E strength rose to 29 aircraft, but because of several aircraft losses in Sep 64 the strength dropped to 25 planes, the total required for one complete squadron. In Oct and Nov 64 the A-1E's strength was in the 30's and at the end of Dec 64 there were 48 Skyraider aircraft on hand and the complete complement of aircraft was expected by 15 Jan 65 including ten attrition aircraft. 107.

In addition to the A-1E, the 34th Tac Gp had 19 O-1F aircraft and five C-47 transports used by the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron and the 1st Air Commando Squadron, respectively. The O-1F strength of 19 increased to 24 in Aug 64 two above the authorized 22. The C-47 underwent one change during that period when a USAF test team arrived from the U.S. in December and configured the aircraft with 7.62 caliber mini-guns. Called the PC-47 the tests were highly

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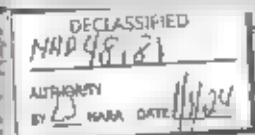
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\* 108.  
successful.

Immediately following the Gulf of Tonkin incidents, involving attacks by North Vietnamese against elements of the U.S. 7th Fleet on 2-5 Aug 64, 40 B-57 Canberra jet bombers of the 8th and 13th Bomb Squadrons, 405th Fighter Wing, Clark AB in the Philippine Islands were deployed to Bien Hoa to soup-up U.S. contingency forces in South Vietnam. The B-57 is capable of striking into North Vietnam and China if necessary. During the last months of 1964 the B-57 was used on aerial strikes within Vietnam, but flew extensive training missions in-country. While in South Vietnam the B-57 units were under the operational control of the 34th Tac Gp and 2d Air Division. Although 40 arrived in August only 36 became immediately operational since two were lost in crashes upon arrival at Bien Hoa. At the end of September 37 were operational. At the end of October 20 of these aircraft were returned to Clark to provide for further training. Twenty operational B-57s remained in South Vietnam on 31 Oct 64. This proved to be an excellent move because on 1 Nov 64 the Viet Cong staged a mortar attack on Bien Hoa and destroyed five of the remaining 20 B-57's and seriously damaged another eight. The remaining seven suffered minor damage. Had the additional B-57s remained at Bien Hoa, losses would have been far heavier. All the aircraft except the five salvaged were returned to Clark as soon as they were sufficiently repaired, and in late Nov 64, ten were returned to Bien Hoa. At the end of Dec 64 the B-57 strength at

\* See Munitions section, New Weapons

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that base was still ten aircraft.<sup>110.</sup>

The smallest operation at Bien Hoa was the U-10 section of the 34th Tactical Group. This section was made up of only three aircraft used by only five pilots of the 34th Tac Gp for psychological warfare. In July and August the 34th had four of these aircraft. One crashed due to engine failure in Sep 64. That aircraft had not been replaced at the end of Dec 64 and the section operated with the three remaining planes. Because of the tactics required in psychological warfare the U-10 was extremely adequate since it could fly long periods at required low speeds and loiter at low altitudes. One serious situation experienced by U-10 pilots was the aircraft's susceptibility to ground fire.<sup>111.</sup>

In August the first H-43B helicopters were arriving in Southeast Asia. The first of the much needed rescue aircraft were received at Bien Hoa 14 Aug 64 when three of the helicopters arrived. On 1 Nov 64, all three of the H-43B aircraft at Bien Hoa were seriously damaged by the VC mortar attack on the base and a fourth H-43F, which had arrived the previous day, was also damaged. All three B models were replaced during Nov 64 by H-43F's which were sent to Thailand along with three more from Da Nang.<sup>112.</sup>

#### Tan Son Nhut

The aircraft structure at Tan Son Nhut, the major airport in South Vietnam located just outside the city limits of the Republic of Vietnam capital city of Saigon, remained much the same in the

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last six months of 1964 as it was the previous six months. There was a slight build up of tactical air defense aircraft and transport aircraft during the six month period as a result of the contingency requirements effected by the Gulf of Tonkin incidents.

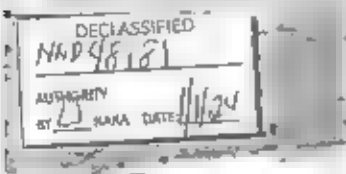
The main Air Force aircraft operating out of Tan Son Nhut was 36 C-123 Providers during the first six months of the year and the strength jumped to 55 of these versatile aircraft by the end of Dec 64. Originally the 309th Troop Carrier Squadron and the 310th Troop Carrier Squadron utilized the C-123 but with the formation of the 19th Air Commando Squadron in Oct 64, the additional C-123's were brought into the theater bringing the end of the year strength to 72.<sup>113.</sup>

One item of importance at Tan Son Nhut was the increased strength of Able Mable RF-101 reconnaissance fighter aircraft. At the end of Jun 64 there were six of these aircraft assigned to Tan Son Nhut. This total was increased to ten in July and to 12 in August through Dec 64. These aircraft were rotational from the 15th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron on Okinawa. The Patricia Lynn RB-57 strength remained the same at Tan Son Nhut with two aircraft assigned to the 334 Tac Gp until December when a third aircraft was added to the unit.<sup>114.</sup>

The remaining aircraft strength at Tan Son Nhut remained the same for the last six months of the year with one VC-123, one VC-47, one VC-54, three C-54s and two U-3B aircraft.<sup>115.</sup>

Air Defense aircraft at Tan Son Nhut in July was four F-102 aircraft which were rotated periodically from bases in Okinawa and

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the Philippine Islands. As a result of the increased contingency force in Vietnam, two more F-102 aircraft were brought into the country in Aug 64, increasing the total to six. At the end of Dec 64, it was planned that in early 1965, F-4C Phantom II aircraft would be phased into the theater to replace the F-102 for air defense purposes. Several of these aircraft were flown into the country for familiarization flights in early Jan and Feb 65. Actual dates of the change over had not been determined at the end of 1964 but it was planned for some time in Apr 65.

116.

#### Da Nang

At Da Nang, 16 C-123 Providers of the 311th Troop Carrier Squadron were the main aircraft assigned to the air base for in-country operations during the period. Six F-102's were brought into Da Nang for air defense as a direct result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents, and eight F-100 aircraft were deployed for tactical reasons as the result of the Southeast Asia contingency build-up in Jul 64. In Aug 64 the total of F-100 aircraft remained the same and from September through December fluctuated from 15-27 aircraft. The largest number of F-100 deployed was in Sep 64 when 27 were on hand. Also for a short period of time six F-105 fighter bombers were assigned to Da Nang in Nov 64. (All the total figures for F-100 aircraft and the F-105 can not be considered actual monthly figures as the strength of the aircraft were rotated in and out of the base as need required. This was greatly

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increased in the early months of 1965 when air strikes in Laos and North Vietnam increased).<sup>117.</sup>

In answer to a requirement for search and rescue aircraft in Southeast Asia, SA-16 Albatross aircraft were brought into the theater in Jun 64. Four of these aircraft were alternated between Da Nang and Bien Hoa. These aircraft were supplemented in August by the arrival of the Air Force H-43B Air Rescue Helicopter three at Da Nang and three Bien Hoa. This was the first professional helicopter rescue unit to arrive in SEA. In Nov 64 the H-43B's at Da Nang and Bien Hoa were replaced by H-43P models, specially modified for use in Southeast Asia. They were equipped with special 250 foot cable winches for high rain forest rescue attempts and heavy armor plating for ground fire protection. The H-43B helicopters were then sent to Thailand for use in rescue operations in that country. The aircraft at Da Nang were part of Det. 5, Pacific Air Rescue Center.<sup>118. 119.</sup>

#### Thailand

The contingency build-up in Thailand began in Jun 64 when F-102 aircraft were sent to that country to assist in its air defense against possible aggression from the communist block. The F-102 aircraft, on a rotational basis from Okinawa and Clark AB, were positioned at Don Muang Air Base, some 18 miles from the city of Bangkok. Along with the F-102 aircraft were six F-100s positioned at Takhli. Four KB-50 tankers were stationed at Don Muang for air to air refueling

\* The requirement for the H-43 was outlined in Chapter I, 2d AD History, Jan-Jun 1964.

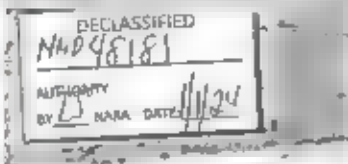
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of the supersonic F-100's. The KB-50's were also periodically  
120.  
positioned at Korat.

Immediately following the Gulf of Tonkin attacks, the contingency build-up increased at a high velocity. Twelve additional F-100 aircraft were sent to Thailand to supplement the six F-100's already at Takhli bringing the Supersabres strength to 18 in Aug 64 and the strength remained the same through December. This contingency build-up was further supplemented by 18 F-105 Thunderchief tactical fighters. The F-105's were positioned at Korat and the strength remained the  
121.  
same throughout the remainder of 1964.

An air rescue capability was established at Nakhon Phanom ten miles from the Laotian border on 19 Jun 64 when two H-43B helicopters were put into operation. In November, after the arrival of H-43F helicopters in South Vietnam, these H-43B's were supplemented by six H-43B's from Bien Hoa and Da Nang air bases. The H-43B's were used in rescue missions involving U.S. and Laotian aircraft in the Laotian  
122.  
battle against the Pathet Lao. The new H-43B's in Thailand were positioned at the various bases throughout the country as required.

The remaining USAF T-28 aircraft still in use in Southeast Asia were stationed at Udorn in Thailand. There were only eight in existence at the end of July 1964, but the strength rose to 21 at the end of December. These aircraft, still accountable to 2d Air Division, were on loan to the Laotian Government for use against the Communist  
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Pathet Lao.



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The status of aircraft possessed in Southeast Asia in the last six months of 1964 was:

# Aircraft Possessed SEA

Type	Country	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
C-123	RVN	50	50	47	76	77	72
C-54	RVN	4	4	4	4	4	4
VC-47	RVN	1	1	1	1	1	1
VC-123	RVN	1	1	1	1	1	1
U-3B	RVN	2	2	2	2	2	2
A-1H	RVN	15	29	25	33	37	48
U-10B	RVN	4	4	3	3	3	3
C-47	RVN/THAI	7	7	7	6	6	6
O-1F	RVN	19	24	24	23	23	22
HF-101	RVN	10	12	12	12	12	12
HB-57	RVN	2	2	2	2	2	3
B-57	RVN	0	38	37	20	10	10
T-28	RVN/THAI	8	3	18	20	21	21
F-100	RVN	8	8	27	26	18	15
F-102	RVN	4	6	6	6	6	6
F-105	RVN	0	0	0	0	6	0
F-100	THAI	6	18	18	18	18	18
F-102	THAI	4	4	4	4	4	4
F-105	THAI	0	18	18	18	18	18

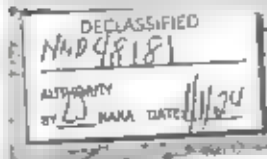
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Type	Country	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
KB-50	THAI	4	4	4	4	4	4
H-16	THAI/RVN	4	5	5	4	4	4
H-43B/F	THAI/RVN	2	6	6	10	13	13 6

The overall strength of USAF aircraft in Southeast Asia increased from 155 in July to 286 in Dec 64. The highest one month strength total in the theater was 293 in October. The biggest increase in strength was in the tactical aircraft class, including transports. The C-123 strength was up almost 50 per cent and with the contingency build-up, tactical fighter bombers newly added to the inventory strengthened Vietnam and Thailand defenses. The most important increase in the South Vietnam war was the steady build-up of the A-1E Skyraiders at Bien Hoa. The A-1E of the USAF and the A-1H of the Vietnamese Air Force were the backbone of airpower against the Viet Cong. This airpower began to prove its usefulness against the enemy in actions late in 1964.

#### NOES and O/R Rates

Operational Ready (O/R) and Not Operational Requiring Spares (NOES) rates for all aircraft in both Thailand and South Vietnam were satisfactory during the last six months of 1964. The C-123 and A-1E rates were highly acceptable during the period considering the number of sorties and hours flown during the period. It must be noted that



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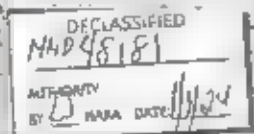
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the A-1E was a comparatively new aircraft to Air Force personnel and an outstanding job was done by supply personnel in Vietnam and the United States to rush spare parts to the Southeast Asia A-1E facility to keep the aircraft in commission. The A-1E support packages arrived in Vietnam in Jun 64 and modified STAE procedures were sufficient to allow acceptable MORS rates to be maintained. Only once did the A-1E jump over the acceptable 5 per cent standard for MORS. This was in Aug 64 when it reached 5.7 per cent. In July it was 1.8 for the six month low total and reached 4.5 in December and 4.4 in November. The O/R rate for the A-1E hovered between 76.4 124. per cent in September to an 80 per cent in July.

The C-123, its strength jumping from 47 aircraft in September to 76 in October, jumped over the acceptable MORS rates three times in the last six months of the year. The main reason for the higher rate was the increased strength of aircraft and the fact that the pipeline had not caught up with the increase within supply channels. The highest MORS rate was 9.1 per cent in November but the rate had dropped to 6.1 in December. In July a monthly low was reached of 2.5 per cent. The C-123 maintenance crews did an outstanding job keeping the C-123 operationally ready. At no time during the period Jul-Dec 64 did the O/R percentage rate dip below 80 and in November the rate jumped to a 90 per cent total.

The most serious O/R or MORS rates were found in support aircraft such as the C-54, and U-38 aircraft. Rates, because of the

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low number of assigned aircraft, had a tendency to jump much higher than the rates for aircraft with several dozen assigned. The U-10B, used at Bien Hoa for the psychological warfare, had a serious NORS problem in Nov 64 when the percentage jumped to 24.5. It was back down to a 0.09 percentage in December. The NORS and OR rates for all aircraft in the last six months were:

USAF Aircraft O/R Percentages (Jul-Dec 64)

<u>AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
C-123	83.0	81.0	80.0	82.0	90.0	82.0
C-54	84.0	93.8	61.5	63.0	91.1	66.0
VC-47	72.0	75.4	89.1	98.3	87.5	96.5
VC-123	99.6	72.1	86.2	84.8	88.0	96.7
U-3B	59.1	73.7	68.4	50.1	86.8	92.0
A-1E	80.0	78.2	76.4	79.9	79.7	79.4
U-10B	80.8	85.1	64.5	77.8	70.2	77.1
C-47	81.3	86.3	82.3	85.5	89.6	83.4
C-1F	84.7	80.4	86.4	87.1	86.1	85.8
RF-101	88.1	92.5	91.9	94.7	87.0	88.5
EB-57	80.9	93.6	89.9	92.5	95.6	97.3
F-2B	83.7	---	83.7	80.2	74.7	84.1

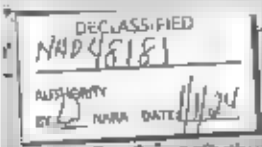
USAF Aircraft NORS (Jul-Dec 64)

C-123	2.5	3.1	5.6	4.5	9.1	6.1
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\* All B-57 bombers and century series fighter bombers were being maintained by parent unit maintenance crews and mobility kits. O/R and NORS rates for these aircraft were not available to 2d AD but were being maintained by the parent units.

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Aircraft Losses Accidents

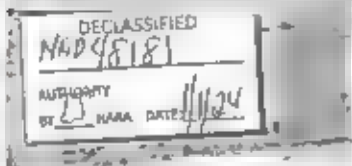
In the last six months of 1964 aircraft losses in Southeast Asia doubled. There were 15 major losses and accidents in the first half of the year and 36 losses in the last half of the calendar year. Many of the losses, Jul-Dec 64, resulted from the increased USAF air activity in the South Vietnamese fight against the Viet Cong and the Air Force strike and reconnaissance assistance supplied by the United States in Laos. Also contributing to the higher losses was the increased anti-aircraft effectiveness of the Viet Cong and Pathet Lao.

There were no serious aircraft deficiencies such as wing wrinkles in C-123 aircraft and wing failures in fighter bombers as were experienced in the first half of the year. The new A-1E was performing at its best in the theater and the C-123 indicated no new operational problems.

As the war increased in intensity and the use of U.S. aircraft became more prominent, more combat losses were experienced. In the first half of the year only eight losses could be directly attributed to combat, while in the latter part of the year more than 20 were attributed directly to combat situations. Ten of the T-28 crashes occurred during direct support of operations in Laos. All the T-28 crashes were out of Udorn Air Base in Thailand on direct attacks on the Pathet Lao.

The most serious loss of aircraft in one day resulted from the Viet Cong attack on Bien Hoa Air Base on 1 Nov 64. Five B-57 aircraft

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were totally destroyed and eight more seriously damaged out of 20 parked on the base ramp. The remaining aircraft were damaged slightly.  
126.

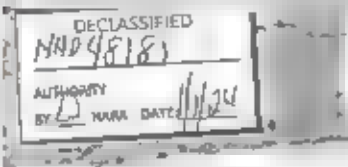
The A-1E had a period of difficulty from 29 Aug to 2 Oct 64 when five of the Skyraiders were shot down by Viet Cong ground fire and three others crashed for various reasons.  
127.

Following are aircraft losses for the period Jul-Dec.  
128.

Aircraft Losses

<u>Date</u>	<u>Type Aircraft</u>	<u>Reason for Loss</u>
7 Jul 64	T-28*	Combat loss-ground fire
14 Jul 64	T-28*	Combat loss-ground fire
16 Jul 64	T-28*	Combat loss-ground fire
23 Jul 64	C-123	Crash landing
5 Aug 64	B-57	Crashed for unknown reasons coming to Vietnam for Tonkin contingency build-up.
5 Aug 64	B-57	Taxi-incident arriving in Vietnam (aircraft was salvaged)
13 Aug 64	T-28*	Combat loss-ground fire
18 Aug 64	T-28*	Combat loss-ground fire
18 Aug 64	T-28*	Combat loss-ground fire
18 Aug 64	F-100	Combat loss, ground fire
29 Aug 64	A-1E	Combat loss, ground fire

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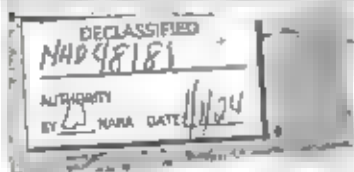


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~~SECRET~~Aircraft losses (Cont)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Type Aircraft</u>	<u>Reason for Loss</u>
7 Sep 64	B-10B	Crashed due to engine failure
23 Sep 64	A-1E	Combat loss, ground fire
23 Sep 64	A-1E	Combat loss, ground fire
26 Sep 64	A-1E	Combat loss, unknown
2 Oct 64	A-1E	Combat loss, ground fire
24 Oct 64	C-123	Combat loss, ground fire, shot down by Cambodian troops while off course near Viet- namese border
29 Oct 64	A1-E	Crashed, unknown
1 Nov 64	C-123	Crashed at sea
1 Nov 64	B-57	Destroyed in VC mortar attack on Bien Hoa
1 Nov 64	B-57	same as above
1 Nov 64	B-57	same as above
1 Nov 64	B-57	same as above
1 Nov 64	B-57	same as above
7 Nov 64	O-1F	Combat loss, ground fire
18 Nov 64	F-100	Combat loss, ground fire
19 Nov 64	T-28*	Hit mountain
19 Nov 64	T-28*	Hit mountain
21 Nov 64	F-101	Combat loss, ground fire

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Aircraft losses (Cont)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Type Aircraft</u>	<u>Reason for Loss</u>
26 Nov 64	A-1E	Combat loss, hit tree on napalm run
27 Nov 64	F-102	Flame-out
1 Dec 64	A-1E	Combat loss, ground fire
4 Dec 64	T-28*	Crashed on landing
10 Dec 64	C-123	Hit mountain
19 Dec 64	T-28*	Combat loss, ground fire
31 Dec 64	C-1P	Missing, reason unknown

\* All T-28 aircraft are on loan to "Water Pump" and are still accountable to Hq 2d Air Div.

CAMRONS

Da Nang

The 23rd CAMRON at Da Nang was responsible for the maintenance of sixteen C-123 aircraft assigned to the 311th Troop Carrier Squadron at that base and all transient aircraft. The only aircraft the 23d maintenance shops were not responsible for were tactical aircraft assigned to the base as strike and air defense aircraft which were stationed at Da Nang on a rotational (TDY) basis. Each of the TDY units carried its own maintenance personnel to complete the assigned mission. The 23d CAMRON held an 84.3 per cent operational ready standard enabling the squadron to fly 5,982.5 hours, supporting some 6,245 sorties. The CAMRON supported 2,494 transient aircraft more

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than twice the 1,091 now assigned aircraft serviced in the first half of 1964. The highest monthly total for transient support was 467 in December and a low of 347 in July. The highest amount of flying time for the 311th in the last six months of 1964 was 1,124.9 hours in December and a low of 877.4 for the month of August.<sup>129.</sup>

#### Tan Son Nhut

The 33rd Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Tan Son Nhut had the most diversified maintenance job in Southeast Asia. As a result of varying mission, members of the 33d CAMRON were positioned in Don Muang, Thailand; Nha Trang, Det 1 and 2 at Tan Son Nhut and Can Tho in South Vietnam. At Nha Trang, personnel were assigned on temporary duty with the 37th Air Base Squadron and at Don Muang Thailand, C-123 maintenance personnel were assigned on temporary duty with the 35th Tactical Group. Detachment 1, 33d Tactical Group was responsible for the maintenance of Patricia Lynn RB-57 aircraft which flew daily operational reconnaissance missions throughout the Republic of Vietnam. In addition to the regular C-123 mission, supporting some 55 C-123 aircraft at the end of 1964, the 33d CAMRON was responsible for the up-keep of all support aircraft and the maintenance of the hundreds of transient planes that fly in and out of Saigon monthly.<sup>130.</sup> This, however, did not include MATS C-135 aircraft and MATS contract carriers which were serviced by Air Vietnam.<sup>131.</sup>

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The 33d CAMRON supported 310th and 309th C-123's and the added 19th Air Commando Squadron C-123's for a total of 16,000.9 flying hours during the last six months of 1964. The highest monthly total was 3328.7 hour in October and the low was 2425.4 in September. 132.

#### Bien Hoa

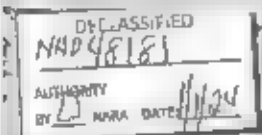
At Bien Hoa, the 34th CAMRON had the most complex maintenance job of all the 2d Air Div CAMRONS. Bien Hoa was the only exclusive tactical base in Vietnam, C-47, O-1F and A-1E maintenance was completed with the addition of periodic maintenance. At all other bases periodic inspections are performed at Clark. 133.

The CAMRON at Bien Hoa supported 10,282 flying hours by A-1E aircraft which included 5,417 sorties. Maintenance also included an assortment of major and minor repairs including extensive battle damage and results of aircraft damaged in the 1 Nov 64 mortar attack by the Viet Cong. The CAMRON also supported 11,600 hours of O-1F flying 3,113 hours by the C-47 and PC-47 and 1,382 hours by the U-10B psychological warfare mission. The average monthly O/R rates for the aircraft were: 78.2 per cent (A-1E), 85.8 per cent (O-1F), and 73.7 per cent for (U-10B). 134.

#### Servicing of MATS Aircrafts

The bulk of military personnel arriving in and departing South Vietnam and Thailand were transported by Military Air Transport

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Service aircraft or civilian contract carriers under contract to MATS. On 14 Oct 64 Col. B.H. Davidson, Director of Materiel, 2d Air Div, completed a study of measures which had been taken to protect and safeguard MATS and MATS contract carriers while at Tan Son Nhut. The study covered the practice of contracting for the services of foreign nationals. The investigation was made by Colonel Davidson along with the 50th District OSI; Commander, Det 2, 1503d ATW, MATS at Tan Son Nhut; Commander 8th Aerial Port Squadron; Director of Security and Law Enforcement, 2d Air Div; Transportation Officer, 2d Air Div and the OIC Security and Law Enforcement, 33d Tactical Group. 135.

The investigation began 17 Sep 64 at the direction of Maj Gen Joseph H. Moore, commander 2d Air Div<sup>136</sup>. on four major areas of operation. General security, baggage handling, contract services for MATS aircraft and freight (hold baggage and military freight). It was found that in all four of the areas studied, the employment of Vietnamese Nationals was interwoven throughout the various aspects of USAF and American Flag Carrier operations at Tan Son Nhut. In regards to the study Colonel Davidson said: 137.

"...The scope and complexity of operations by USAF and American Flag Carriers is such that we cannot extricate ourselves from this situation without considerable long range planning to develop a separate capability. Such a decision would be a radical departure from present concepts of operation and would probably require major policy decisions at the highest diplomatic, Department of Defense and National

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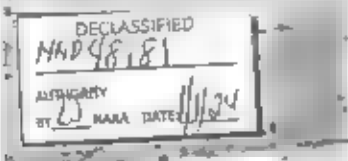
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levels. Further, the past record of safety and security do not justify such drastic measures at this time..."

Responsibility for the security of MATS aircraft and contract carriers at Tan Son Nhut was shared by the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) and the Vietnamese National Police. This was, however, a satisfactory arrangement since the Director General, National Police was very cooperative in permitting U.S. Air Force to aid in securing MATS and MATS contract carriers, as well as other American Flag Carriers. The procedures for this protection was included in the 33d Tac Gp Security and Law Enforcement Operating Procedure Number 31. Security checks made on Vietnamese Nationals, working at the Tan Son Nhut airport in capacities that involve them with MATS aircraft, consists of a National Police back-ground and character reference. In addition each employee must have two recommendations from relatives, friends, or members of his family who are in the government services. OSI officials in Saigon were reluctant to give an evaluation regarding the effectiveness of Vietnamese Security background investigations. The OSI participation in security at the Tan Son Nhut terminal consists of case investigations and counter-intelligence operations. The OSI at Tan Son Nhut had locally developed "sources" which were used to obtain information regarding sabotage, and had a developed and proven counter-intelligence capability.

On 26 Jun 64, the Viet Cong terrorist attempted to blow up a MATS C-135 Straalifter parked in the terminal area, in which two Army men

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were slightly injured with no damage to the aircraft. The OSI obtained information regarding the attempt and identified the individual to the Vietnamese National Police on 23 Jun 64, three days prior to the incident. The National Police had the individuals under surveillance but delayed apprehension hoping the suspect would lead them to associates. The local MATS commander was satisfied with the security at Tan Son Nhut, but was aware of MATS Headquarters concern for the security of aircraft operating from Tan Son Nhut. Long range planning as far forward as 1 Jun 65 will separate international and domestic services at Tan Son Nhut and will reduce the number of Vietnamese personnel having access to the International Carrier Area where MATS and MATS contract Carriers primarily operate. Colonel Davidson  
139  
stated that:

"...Regardless of these precautions and security measures, the Tan Son Nhut International Airport is a public area, and the possible potential Viet Cong threat is considerable. Further, the Viet Cong are getting more sophisticated in their use of explosives, and it is known they have a capability to develop fuses with timing devices..."

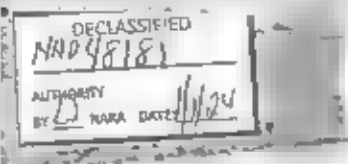
It was further noted that USAF Air Police have jurisdiction only over USAF aircraft, flightline facilities operated by the USAF and buildings occupied by USAF personnel. Procedures established at the passenger service section at the main terminal building 20 Sep 64, positioned one air policeman at a specific surveillance point where he was able to watch all baggage brought by USAF passengers from

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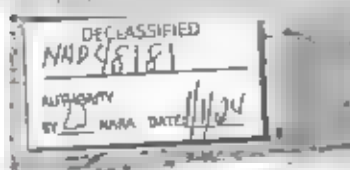
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necessary by quality control personnel from Detachment 4, APEFE who exercise USAF surveillance over Air Vietnam work on USAF aircraft. 141.

There was rarely any maintenance done on Contract Carriers at Tan Son Nhut and when maintenance was required it was inspected by an FAA certified mechanic. MATS officials have stated that at no time had there been a maintenance incident that could be traced back to improper maintenance, intentional or otherwise, to Tan Son Nhut. MATS and Contract Carrier aircraft operated in and out of Tan Son Nhut in only daylight hours and rarely ever remained over night, except for one type aircraft, the C-124 Globemaster, operating from Japan. MATS officials stated that there had never been any trouble involving MATS or MATS Contract Carriers at Tan Son Nhut in ground handling, pilfering, tampering or any other suspicious activities except for the 26 June 64 bombing which occurred 70 yards from a MATS C-135. At the end of the year MATS contracts still had six months to go. Two contracts were in force, one for ground handling, \$50,000.00 a year and maintenance, running somewhat over this amount. 142.

The monthly passenger average originating at Tan Son Nhut for MATS and MATS Contract Carriers was 2,000 with an annual passenger operation of 24,586. Freight originating at Tan Son Nhut amounts to 305 tons monthly and 3,664 tons annually. Mail which was handled by military personnel amounted to 152 tons annually. 143.

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### Civil Engineering

The Gulf of Tonkin incidents and the contingency build-up placed a sudden and heavy workload on the engineers in South Vietnam and Thailand. Electricity, extremely important requirement, was still in critically short supply. Construction of new power plants at bases in South Vietnam and Thailand were programmed to start in Sep 64 but delays in plans and re-sitings delayed work until Nov 64. At the end of the year, the plants at Bien Hoa, Da Nang, Tan Son Nhut and Don Muang, Thailand were in full swing and construction was expected to be completed on all plants in Apr 65, thus eliminating some of the vital power shortages.

Land use was a major problem which caused many delays in siting and construction. The procedure for acquiring land for military use in Southeast Asia (both Thailand and South Vietnam) was an awkward and time consuming process. Lt. Col. George G. Shackley, 2d Air Div  
144.  
Civil Engineer told of problems facing him in South Vietnam:

"...Siting approval must be processed locally (base) and approved at base level. The base approved plan is submitted through MACV for processing to the Republic of Vietnam High Command. The High Command approval process is time consuming. Approval from the High Command takes from 30-90 days depending upon the political situation at the time. A 30-day processing time can be expected to be minimum with no assurance of approval upon return. In most cases projects are processed concurrently with the land use approval

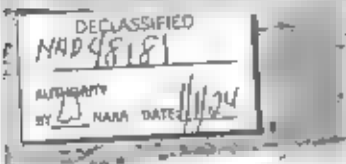
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request. If the land use is not approved the entire process must begin again and necessary changes and adjustments made to the projects documents. This appears to be an unsolvable problem under the ground rules established..."

Other problems in South Vietnam which proved roadblocks to construction projects were contractor security problems, changed construction costs, poor quality of workmanship, and poor quality of locally procured materials. The US Navy was the designated construction agency for Southeast Asia as the Army is for Europe. Prior to the build-up in Aug 64, in SEA the normal time for design and construction could be permitted without serious adverse affect upon the mission. Since Aug 64, the resources of all US agencies have been severely strained to provide more facilities in a short period of time. Delays in design and construction, as well as land use approval had a serious effect on the mission of all US Forces. The only US-supervised civilian construction force in South Vietnam, Raymond, Morrison and Knudsen, (RMK) was swamped with work and all US agencies were competing for its services. In many cases, to meet urgent requirements, 2d Air Div was forced to construct facilities by using overhire local nationals supervised by a few USAF non-commissioned officers. Time did not permit the use of the Navy construction agency due to the long period required for design, advertising, award of contract, the long period required for construction. The design time and the construction time had been lengthened and in some cases beneficial occupancy dates slipped due to the overwhelming work load.

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In Thailand the same problems existed. The Thai government must approve land use and siting of projects before work can be started.  
146.  
Col. Carl L. Aubry, commander of the 35th Tac Gp said of this:

"...A second point of discussion and in some cases bordering on conflict with the Thai Air Force is the problem of real estate. Anytime of course, when a force is increased by four times and we go from one thousand to four thousand, housing and construction of barracks becomes a problem. The Thai, again, if they are informed on this increase have been very cooperative in giving us real estate upon which to build housing, however, they have recently changed their position from that of giving us a free hand from one which to see the plans of the cantonment areas and if not to approve them at least have the right to veto. I still don't anticipate any problem in this area, but again it points out the fact that this is becoming increasingly important to advise them on our intention and our plans..."

In regards to a recent cancellation of a cantonment area at Don Muang in Thailand, Colonel Aubry continued:  
147.

"...It is what happened here in Don Muang... on the third of March, I had a conference with authorities in the Thai Air Force in which they approved the cantonment area for the Don Muang cantonment. In the same meeting they gave me real estate approval on a cantonment at Takhli. The Royal Thai Air Force of course is continuing to operate themselves. The point which touched off the meeting on real estate actually revolved around the use of a new ramp, for aircraft parking at Don Muang. The Thai, without our coordination had let a contract

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to extend the military runway, from 5,000 to 10,000 feet with an accompanying taxiway. The construction of this runway and taxiway will deny in a very short time the use of transport aircraft of the Royal Thai Air Force from an active runway and this generated a request in which they asked us to move off the new ramp and let them park their aircraft...The problem has not been settled positively, this date, but, I'm confident that we will be able to function without anymore serious handicap than would normally be expected if major construction went on in the airport..."

Some of the problems encountered due to the contingency build-up were ones that could not be overcome easily. Because of the nature of the situation it was impossible to plan or program facilities in the normal manner and still meet operational requirements. The rapid deployment of aircraft and supporting units to Bien Hoa in South Vietnam and Korat, Udorn and Nakhon Phanom necessitated "crash" construction which resulted in marginal facilities. When a unit was deployed to Nakhon Phanom the Civil Engineer had no advance notice of the move. The unit was on its way to the base before 2d Air Div was informed of the requirement to provide living and other support facilities. Construction was completed through the use of local labor supervised by a few NCOs drawn from the 35th Tactical Group Civil Engineering Office. Materials not available on the local market flown in from Bangkok. The austere facilities were provided in a matter of a few days. Normal design and planning

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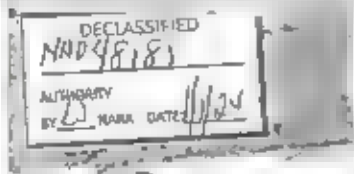
procedures would have taken several months before construction could  
148.  
have begun.

In the case of the deployment to Korat, the 9th Logistics Command Engineer Unit (US) Army provided facilities in minimum time. These facilities were austere and left much to be desired in terms of sanitary and messing facilities, but again time did not permit following normal procedures. One problem did arise at Korat in Oct 64. The Navy (who, as mentioned before, was responsible for all construction by contract in SEA) complained that the Army was not authorized to build these facilities since the Navy was the only authorized construction agency. The Army, although almost completely finished with the project, discontinued work. At the direction of 13th Air Force, the project was continued by in-house construction resources and still  
149.  
was not being done by the Navy.

The rapid build-up at Bien Hoa and Udorn were other examples. It was realized that these deployments were unforeseen and unavoidable, however, austere, poorly planned and constructed facilities were the result of the operation. An adequately manned Civil Engineering organization would have been more responsive and possibly would  
150.  
have provided better facilities.

Another problem found in both countries was that of airfield maintenance. Under the standard accepted concept airfield maintenance was to be accomplished by the host country. This was not evident in either country. Maintenance, when accomplished, was either done

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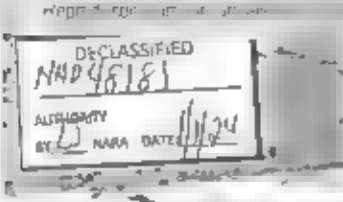
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by small USAF base engineer units or by a Military Assistance Program contract. The maintenance of airfields will become a major problem with increased use of high performance aircraft and the lack of a satisfactory maintenance program. This problem was under study by 13th Air Force at the end of 1964.<sup>151</sup>

The generator problem which existed in the first six months of 1964 was still in evidence. Power production was an ever-present problem, and the use of high speed light duty generators, which are designed for emergency use to supply primary power, was the main cause of the problem. Many of the generators were old and would eventually wear out. The new power plants under construction would ease these problems. With the lack of generators at different bases, generators were transferred from base to base to fill immediate commitments as required. The supply support for generators remained poor and contributed to the power problem. Much was done in the last six months to accelerate the supply support for generators but until such time as adequate spare parts were on the shelf the generator problem would continue. At the end of the year a generator repair depot was being established at Clark AB, but readily available spare parts for minor repair will still be required on the site. Lt. Col. George G. Shackley<sup>152</sup> spoke of a particular generator problem at Tan Son Nhut:

"...A specific example is the 200KW Cummins Diesel generator at Tan Son Nhut. The unit was received in a damaged condition in March 1964. The replacement parts have been on

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order and re-order and at the end of 1964 were still not on hand. The loss of this generator reduces the capability of the main plant by 20 per cent whereas the power demand is increasing daily..."

Accomplished construction in Southeast Asia and new projects were voluminous as a result of the Tonkin Gulf and new contingency plans at the end of 1964 foresaw still greater strain on existing resources. Construction projects and status at SEA bases were as follows:

Tan Son Nhut

At Tan Son Nhut, South Vietnam several projects highlighted the accomplishments of the 33d Tac Gp Engineering section during the last six months of 1964. One was the establishment of preventive maintenance crews which provided for the inspection, repair and/or replacement of defective plumbing and electrical fixtures before they became major problems and resulted in emergencies and expensive overtime. This also resulted in the formation of night duty crews to handle emergency calls after normal duty hours. An important project was the clearing and leveling of some 2,000 acres of unimproved ground around the perimeter of the base for necessary security measures. The land was overgrown with brush and weeds up to five or six feet high. The main construction project, not overlooking the new power plant being built, was the tearing down of substandard tents and replacing them with wood frame huts. The project has

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begun in early October and was expected to be completed in late  
153.  
April 1965.

### Bien Hoa

As a result of the Tonkin Gulf incidents constructions at Bien Hoa was required for billets and messing facilities. Twenty new dormitories were erected which provided 22,000 square feet of living area. At the same time a new messing facility was built which gave Bien Hoa 1,500 square feet of feeding space. All the construction was done by in-house capabilities using local labor and military supervision. As a direct result of the 1 Nov 64 mortar attack by the Viet Cong, aircraft dispersal pads, perimeter defense lines and passive defense bunkers were required. Construction began in December on the aircraft dispersal pads, and the number required was determined at 36. The Civil Engineer began construction on time but was hampered by the lack of equipment. Troop labor from all organizations on the base was enlisted to fill sandbags to be utilized in the erection of revetments walls. As of 31 Dec 64, ten dispersal pads with revetments were approximately 30 per cent complete. Perimeter defense lines were established as the result of the mortar attack and approximately 2/5 of a mile of earthen embankment was erected. This provided an area of 80 defensive bunkers. Approximately \$375,000 was programmed for inclusion in the base operations and maintenance program and another 2.5 million was requested for inclusion in the Military Construction Program.  
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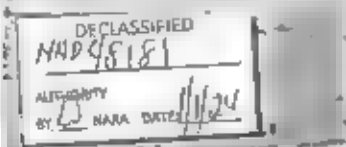
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Da Nang

Prior to the Gulf of Tonkin contingency build-up at Da Nang, South Vietnam's most northern base, in-house forces graded and stabilized an area adjacent to the 8th Aerial Port facility for storage of incoming freight. A temporary liquid oxygen (LOX) plant was also constructed by in-house forces during July. This included a shed, access road, fence, tents, fabrication and installation of a 1,000-gallon fuel tank and caustic pit. A typhoon inflicted heavy damage on Da Nang in Sep 64 and in-house forces were required to leave other important jobs to undertake repair work. Roofs, shutters and screens on nearly every USAF building required repairs. Along with this, tents which had been blown away in the storm, were replaced. In September the last of seven hutments built by in-house labor and facilities was completed to assist in relieving the population bomb. In October the LOX plant shed was rebuilt and extended as the result of partial destruction in the typhoon. Another in-house project at Da Nang was the building of an interim command post complex consisting of rooms for the command section, intelligence briefing, personal equipment and administration. In December a crash project to erect 62 tents was begun for the support of additional fighter squadron personnel. The project, including walks, lights, security fence and latrine facilities, was completed entirely from in-house resources. At the end of Dec 64 the additional requirements created by the influx of tactical aircraft and personnel were being met on a priority basis

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by essentially the same support capability which the 23d Air Base Group had at the beginning of the reporting period. 155.

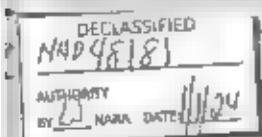
#### Don Muang

At Don Muang, Thailand, major construction was at a minimum. A IOX plant which was contaminated in December was moved to another location and was completed 15 Jan 65, less than one month after it had been started. A new cantonment area was in the planning stages, but siting problems incurred had delayed the project. Actual construction was to begin in early 1965. The construction of the power plant at Don Muang began in November and was scheduled to be completed in February. Slippage in construction due to foundation designs changed the completion date to some time in mid-April 1965. Power at Don Muang was supplied exclusively by the Thailand government as it was at Takhlí. The only exception at Don Muang is the USAF communications center which was powered by USAF generators. 156.

#### Nakhon Phanom

Nakhon Phanom is located some ten miles west of the Laotian border and the build-up at that base came in early September 1964. In-house forces, which included NCOs from the 35th Tac Gp at Don Muang as supervisors and local labor built a temporary cantonment area. In December, 12 additional huts were constructed for temporary quarters for additional personnel living in the town of Nakhon Phanom. Additional plans were being made in December for relocation

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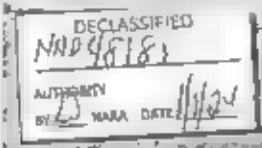
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of the cantonment area and for additional billets. Also a power plant was being planned and was due to be completed some 90 days after the final designs were drawn. Designs were expected to be completed in March 1965. Two other projects completed at Nakhon Phanom in September and November were the addition of runway lights and the construction of a new water well pump and water distribution system which was originally constructed in August. Existing power at Nakhon Phanom was being generated by two serviceable 60 KW generators for the radar equipment and four 30 KW generators for the mess hall. A low voltage pole line distribution system was being installed. The estimated requirements for the base at the end of December was some 180KW which did not include power for runway lighting. Plans for this were being made as well as for NAV-Aid facilities 158.

#### Udon

The first troops arrived at Udon, Thailand in Jul 64 on "Water Pump" operations. Every available civil engineering specialist was sent to Udon out of 35th Tac Gp resources to rehabilitate existing huts which were built by US Navy Sea-Bees in 1961. A new cantonment was planned at that time but in Sep 64 the Thai government turned down the proposed site and a new cantonment design was developed. The new design was approved by the Thai government in Oct 64 and construction was under way in November. Completion of the construction was scheduled for early Jan 65, but as the result of

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additional requirements for some 300 new troops a second package was established in Oct 64 which included the enlargement of the present construction program. The construction of the new package was to begin in Jan 65 and be completed in March. Construction was being planned at the end of 1964 for runway barriers and overruns for high performance aircraft and parking areas as the contingency plans in Thailand increased. Construction on these projects was scheduled for the first part of 1965.

Takhli

At Takhli, Thailand existing facilities were adequate to house the influx of personnel as a result of the Tonkin Gulf incidents. In Nov 64 the construction began on a civil engineering shop which was to be completed in Apr 65. In Dec 64 construction began on 1,000-foot overruns at each end of the Takhli main runway and construction was also due to be completed in Apr 65. An ammunition storage area was started in early Jan 65 and was due to be completed in Aug 65. This project was initiated under plans established under MCP a year prior.

Korat

The build-up at Korat, Thailand was the same type as at Takhli. Construction of 1,000-foot overruns and an ammunition storage area was started at the same time and scheduled completion dates were essentially the same. The influx of 500 personnel required.

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immediate construction of huts which was undertaken by the U.S. Army engineers stationed near Korat. As previously stated the project was completed by in-house resources after the Navy complained about Army assistance. In early 1965, more plans for adequate facilities were being planned.

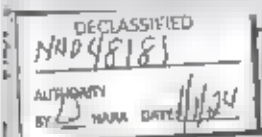
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The only major project at Ubon, Thailand other than the building of a power plant, was that of a new communications facility. Construction began in Oct 64 and was scheduled to be completed in Apr 65.

Nha Trang

A major construction project was designed and programmed for Nha Trang, South Vietnam to accommodate a fourth C-123 Squadron. The initial phase of the project was the construction of a parking ramp, and maintenance facilities as well as a cantonment area. The total estimated cost of the project was 3.5 million dollars which would be followed by an additional 1.5 million for support facilities. It was also planned that the main runway would be rebuilt and a POL storage facility constructed, under Military Assistance Program. At the end of Dec 64, contractor mobilization was being completed and construction was to begin in early 1965.

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Existing Major Runways

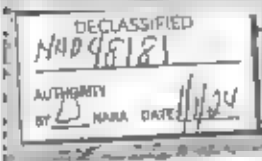
Existing runways in Thailand and South Vietnam which allow for jet traffic included Bien Hoa, Da Nang, Tan Son Nhut, and Nha Trang in South Vietnam; Don Muang, Korat, Koke Kathiem, Takli, Ubon, and Udorn in Thailand. Runway lengths at all bases are:

Don Muang	8,843 feet
Korat	9,845 feet
Koke Kathiem	7,300 feet
Takli	9,845 feet
Tan Son Nhut	9,960 feet
Bien Hoa	10,000 feet
Da Nang	10,000 feet
Ubon	7,000 feet
Nakhon Phanom	6,00 feet
Udorn	7,000 feet
Phitsanulok	6,000 feet
Nha Trang	6,000 feet
Qui Nhon	5,100 feet
Pleiku	6,000 feet

Emergency MCP

At the end of Dec 64 the Emergency MCP for Southeast Asia, forwarded by 2d Air Div to 13AF on 21 Nov 64 was still pending. This included changes in past plans and newly required construction, by priority location, facility, scope and cost.

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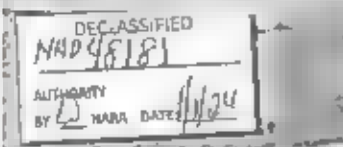
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Plans and programs, other than construction that were under consideration at the end of Dec 64, included the operation and maintenance of power plants by contract. Research and study was completed by 13th Air Force and a request for findings and determination approval was submitted by 2d Air Div to 13th AF for approval. This concept of contract maintenance for operation and maintenance of the major power plants in South Vietnam was considered sound, providing the contract was written to include a provision for contractor furnished parts. The major problem confronting the existing contractor at Tan Son Nhut was the lack of spare parts and supplies. Another program under consideration was the operation and maintenance of Military Assistance Program facilities which were either jointly used by the USAF and the host country or exclusively used by the USAF. This concept was under development by the Civil Engineer at 13th AF. 167.

The generator problem was much the same as previously noted. In Thailand, a program began in October for the Civil Engineers to pick up accountability for some 120 generators belonging to TDY communications units in that country. This would be added to the 59 generators already on hand. The entire turnover of the generators would be completed on 1 Apr 65. 168.

Fire and crash rescue problems were still essentially the same as in the first six months of 1964. There was a shortage of equipment and that which was on hand was old and in most cases in poor condition.

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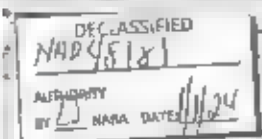
In Oct 64 a representative from 13th AF surveyed the problem and presented estimates for both manpower and equipment and the results were still pending at the end of 1964. The lack of equipment required a great deal of shifting from base to base as necessary, and this program was to continue until adequate fire and crash equipment was available at all installations. With the arrival of high performance aircraft in the theater due to the Tonkin Gulf build-up, this problem became a matter of vital concern.

All in all, the civil engineering functions in both Thailand and South Vietnam were highly taxed due to the build-up in both countries, and the bulk of the work was done in-house with existing personnel resources requiring many men, much equipment and thousands of hours of overtime.

#### Administration

The Directorate of Administrative Services, 2d Air Division was the combined USAF and Air Force Component Command mail and message communications center for the greater part of the Southeast Asia theater of operations. Among responsible units of support are, 2d Air Div, Air Force Component Command MACV, and Air Force Component Command, MACTHAI in Thailand. The successful operation of this center was dependent on the 1964th Communications Group Electrical Transmission Communications Center; Mail and Distribution Center, Directorate of Administrative Services and the Directorate of Administrative Services publications management of MACTHAI, MACV and PACAF.

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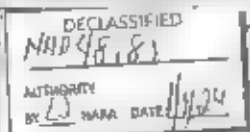
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In message distribution, message traffic received at 2d Air Div rose from 7,785 messages received in Jan 64 to 23,601 in Aug 64 and another 23,753 in September. The main reason for the heavy influx of messages was the build-up in Southeast Asia as the result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents. The entire influx was handled by the originally assigned five or six airmen. These personnel were required to work 12 hours on and 12 hours off seven days a week from 1 May 64 through 26 Sep 64 when they were augmented by 12 more personnel TDY from the United States on TOP DOG, a TDY program similar to Short Spurt which previously sent stateside personnel overseas on 120 days TDY stints. During the period of saturation, the message center received so much Flash and Immediate Precedence traffic at one time that Flash processing time to addressees was up to 1½ hours from the time the message was received in the message center. In Aug 64, 275 Flash messages were received and 3,937 Immediate in an out electrical transmissions were processed. Since an average of five copies had to reproduced for distribution, a total of 21,060 separate internally addressed paper communications in the two categories received urgent distribution. At the end of the year all indications were that the increase in message receipt would continue.

Partial solutions to the problem were provided in validation and approval by PACAF, MACV and JCS of a formal request for additional permanent spaces raising 2CAS authorizations to 38 military personnel. Project Top Dog TDY personnel manning continued to augment the center

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in the interim. Another partial solution was provided by complete renovation, replacement and updating of equipment and facilities. All messages received are reproduced from ditto masters automatically prepared by the teletype machine thus simplifying the reproduction process. In Dec 64, the directorate was still primarily engaged in operating the Message Distribution Center. This took the lion's share of supervision and resources. Some attempts were underway, however, to develop a mail and records management program, particularly in publications management area to meet the needs of the headquarters. The offerings for solution of many of the 1964 problems appeared early in Jan 65, with a TDI officer assistant loaned from Headquarters PACAF, and with the expansion to 38 military spaces with the prognosis<sup>171.</sup> for their being filled in May, June 1965.

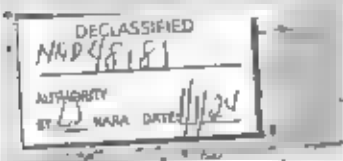
#### Personnel

The personnel section of 2d Air Div felt the brunt of the build-up in Southeast Asia. Authorized and assigned strengths began to increase late in 1964 and by 31 December, authorizations had jumped in SEA from 4,485 personnel to some 7,346 officers and enlisted men in South Vietnam and Thailand.

#### Assignment of Personnel

The rapid build-up in Southeast Asia, due to the Tonkin Gulf incidents, drastically changed the USAF strength in the theater with

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the requirement to pour more than 3,300 TDY personnel into the theater to fill gaps not yet filled by PCS personnel. The biggest influx of TDY personnel was in Thailand where fighter units were deployed to overcome the contingency threat in that country. In Thailand, there were 106 officers and 1,447 enlisted men authorized at the end of Dec 64 and only 66 officers and 734 enlisted men were assigned to fill those authorizations - some 553 men short. At the same time, 210 officers were on TDY in that country and another 1,700 enlisted men were on temporary duty. With the 1,910 personnel on TDY, the authorized strength was more than doubled.

In South Vietnam, 993 officers and 4,790 enlisted men were authorized at the end of 1964. Actually assigned were 695 officers and 4,058 enlisted men. At the same time there were 1,315 enlisted on temporary duty in South Vietnam and another 138 officers were there TDY. Total authorized and assigned strength figures for the last six months in 1964, were not available by month due to the drastic change in personnel. The total figures for 31 Dec 64, compared to 30 Jun 64 were:

Assigned/Authorized/TDY Strength SEA - 30 Jun 64

	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Auth	699	3,786	4,485
Asgd	797	4,308	5,105

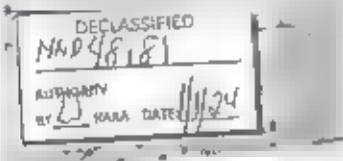
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Dec

Total

TOP DOG

175.



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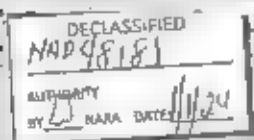
Many opinions were expressed regarding the TOP DOG program in Southeast Asia and many of these reflected the fine assistance TDY personnel provided to the mission. Lt. Col George G. Shackley, 2d Air Div Civil Engineer, spoke about the TOP DOG program in his end of tour report. He said:

"...The TOP DOG Program was probably the most helpful program to the 2d Air Div Civil Engineer. One Major, 5516 and one clerk 70250, arrived in late September 1964. The officer was well qualified and had many years of experience as a staff civil engineer. His knowledge and aggressive attitude accelerated a program that was becoming 'bogged down' due to a shortage of well qualified personnel and an increasing workload. This officer was recently replaced by a Top Dog VIII major, 5516, who appears to have the necessary knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to assist until the additional personnel requested in the manpower package are assigned..."

Colonel Carl L. Aubry, commander of the 35th Tactical Group in Thailand had his own feelings about the TOP DOG program:

"...The Top Dog people are undoubtedly well trained and are relatively eager to perform the task for which they were sent. However, the Top Dog personnel or the TDY person in Thailand or Southeast Asia is no true substitute for a PCS person. I know of some instances where the Top Dog person, although adequately trained and confident to perform the duties for which he is assigned, have less of the desire and the attitude of really getting the job done, but was merely marking time and

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performing just another TDY. I think that it is very important that the Top Dog personnel be replaced with PCS type people, however, I think that Top Dog people are the immediate answer and probably the only answer to extremely rapid build up in personnel and equipment that has come into Southeast Asia..."

When asked if a four-month period of TDY for personnel on TOP DOG was too short to utilize personnel effectively, Col. Aubry continued: 178.

"...I would prefer that the Top Dog person come over on a three or four month tour. Which ever it is, is incidental, but rather than to come over on a six month time period on a TDY basis and change over to PCS basis, the same individual. I realize that this would cause considerable hardships in some cases at home, where the families are probably not properly cared for. However, from a purely selfish view point TDY is an excellent means of getting the people over here in a hurry and if they could have been transferred from TDY status to PCS status, I think our position would have strength all along. The qualifications of the Top Dog personnel were high and very great..."

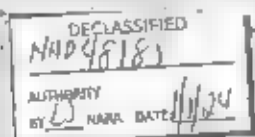
#### DEROS Assignments

During the last six months of 1964, the problem of DEROS assignments to the United States seemed to have been corrected. No complaints were noted in any reports indicating procedures for the return of personnel to the U.S. had been solved.

#### Project Center Stage

In the first six months of 1964 the Commander 2d Air Div was

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burdened with problems that he could not reassign to an officer within his command without authority from higher headquarters. This promoted long delays in reassignment authority through 13th Air Force and PACAF then to Air Force. Under the provision of AFM 35-11, change AD, 30 Oct 64, the commander 2d Air Div had authority to reassign officers within his command by contacting USAF directly and notifying PACAF and 13th AF with information only. This program, called Project Center Stage, proved to be thoroughly satisfactory and under assignment procedures outlined in the change, newly assigned officers from the ZI were scheduled to begin arriving early in the second quarter of calendar year 1965.<sup>179.</sup>

#### Proposed Tour Change

As suggested by the Director of Materiel, 2d Air Div, in his end of tour report in Aug 64, at the end of the year some plans were being considered to lengthen the required tour for some staff officers. It was early Feb 65 that MACV, because of the movement of dependents, began considering a change in their tour from two years (with dependents). In a letter, "Proposed Modification to Tour Length", 15 Feb 65, MACV proposed establishment of a 19 month tour, in two increments for selected staff positions. MACV then requested 2d Air Div proposals.<sup>180.</sup>

In an answer to MACV, from the Commander 2d Air Div, several positions were included in the proposal for a 19-month tour, but he also recommended that incumbents not be included in the change of

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tour lengths. The positions suggested by 2d Air Div for the 19-month tour were, commander, deputy commander, director of operations, chief of plans and programs, chief of operations training, director of intelligence, director of civil engineering and the commanders of the 33d and 35th Tac Groups.  
181.

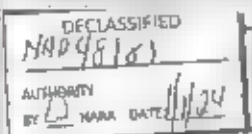
#### CBPO at Tan Son Nhut

In Dec 64, plans were in high gear to establish a Centralized Base Personnel Office in South Vietnam to accommodate the records of personnel assigned in Southeast Asia. Records were then being monitored in the personnel division at Clark AB in P.I. On 12 Dec 64, full coordination was forwarded to Clark by 2d Air Div for establishment of the CBPO with minor exceptions. The establishment of the CBPO was scheduled for April or May 65 with full operational capabilities by 1 Jul 65. The main problem at Tan Son Nhut was the lack of facilities and the CBPO was scheduled to be set up at Clark and moved to Tan Son Nhut as soon as facilities were available. At the end of Dec 64 the SEA reports were compiled with 405th TFW records at Clark. This program would separate them entirely.  
182.  
183.

#### Awards and Decorations

The awards and decorations branch at 2d Air Division continued to be swamped with recommendations for various medals. In the last six months of the year 3,631 awards were processed by 2d Air Div compared to 2,941 in the first six months of the year. The two

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biggest increases were the Air Medal from 2,608 to 2,931 and the Air Force Commendation Medal from 130 to 422. During the period Jul - Dec 64 - 3,407 medals were approved at 2d Air Div and 59 disapproved. Another 112 were approved and forwarded to higher headquarters for further approval. Another 53 were forwarded to higher headquarters recommending disapproval or downgrading. Awards and decorations processed during the period were: 184.

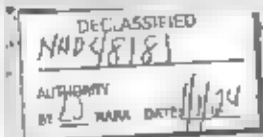
	<u>Considered</u>	<u>Approved</u>	<u>Disapproved</u>
Air Force Cross	2	2*	
Silver Star	12	12*	
Legion of Merit	2	1*	1*
Dist. Flying Cross	119	67*	52*
Airmans Medal	10	19*	
Bronze Star	62	58	4
Joint Service Com Medal	20	20*	
Air Medal	2,931	2,888	43*
Air Force Com Medal	422	410	12
Purple Heart	51	51	
Total	3,631	3,407	59

#### Casualties

The list of casualties during the last six months of 1964 was more than three times that of the first six months of the year. The main reasons for the huge list of casualties which numbered 16 killed in action, five more dying of causes other than hostile action, 60 wounded or injured in hostile action and four missing, were the Viet Cong mortar attack on Bien Hoa where 12 Air Force personnel were wounded, the Viet Cong explosive device which exploded

- \* 2d Air Division does not have authority to make the award but it either recommends approval or disapproval and forwards it to 13th Air Force.

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18 Nov 64 at a Tan Son Nhut restaurant wounding 12 more Air Force personnel, and the Viet Cong explosion at the Brinks BOQ which wounded 12 Air Force personnel. The general breakdown of casualties was:

Killed in Action	16
Missing in Action	4
Wounded in Action (Not Ser)	60
Wounded in Action (Seriously)	1
Accidental Death	5
Natural Death	1
Seriously Ill	1
Accidental Injury (Seriously)	2
Total	90

#### Key Personnel

During the last six months five changes were made in key slots within 2d Air Div, director of personnel, materiel, comptroller, information and the commander, 23d Air Base Group. Key personnel were:

#### List of Key Personnel (as of 31 Dec 64)

Maj. Gen Joseph H. Moore.....	Commander
Colonel Allison G. Brooks.....	Deputy Commander
Colonel Harold L. Price.....	Director of Operations
Colonel Storm C. Rhode, Jr. ....	Director of Intelligence
Lt. Colonel E. A. Levy.....	Director of Personnel
Colonel B.H. Davidson.....	Director of Materiel
Lt. Col George G. Shackley.....	Civil Engineer
Lt. Col Fred J. Held III.....	Comptroller
Lt. Col Frank D. Campbell.....	Director of Information
Col. Spencer A. O'Brien.....	Commander, USAF Disp.
Col. Frank H. Wilcox.....	Commander, 33d Tac Gp
Col. William E. Bethes.....	Commander, 34th Tac Gp
Col. D. D. Bently.....	Commander, 35th Tac Gp
Col. William O. Ezell.....	Commander, 23d AB Gp
Maj. Otto Kratochvil.....	Staff Judge Advocate
Lt. Col. F.T. Killeavy.....	Director of Manpower
Maj. G.F. Tribolet.....	Director of Safety
Lt. Col A. Feldman.....	Director of Security
Maj. A.A. Geisler.....	Chaplain

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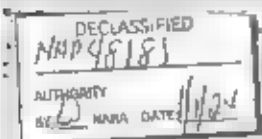
Communications

The physical structure of the 1964th Communications Group in Southeast Asia changed drastically after the Gulf of Tonkin incidents which caused a major contingency build-up in South Vietnam and Thailand. At the beginning of July the 1964 Comm Gp was made up of the headquarters at Tan Son Nhut and six detachments located at Don Muang, Thailand; Ubon, Thailand; Udorn, Thailand; and Bien Hoa, Pleiku and Nha Trang in South Vietnam.

At the outset of the build-up in Southeast Asia, the Comm Group organized into one squadron in Thailand and four detachments, along with five detachments in South Vietnam, directly under the Comm Group itself. On 1 Oct 64, Detachment 1 of the 1964th Communication Group which was located at Don Muang, Thailand, became the 1965th Communications Squadron. At that same time Detachment 6 at Ubon was redesignated as Detachment 3 of the 1965th Communications Squadron. In addition, Detachment 1 and 2 for the 1965th Communications Squadron were activated on 1 Oct and Detachment 4 was activated on 1 Nov. 186.

The 1964th Communications Group also continued to grow. It retained operational control over the Thailand squadron and its detachments and activated another of its own detachments on 1 Oct 64. The new detachment, Number 7, was activated at Can Tho, in the Mekong Delta 60 miles south of Saigon. A breakdown of the units assigned to the 1964th Communications Group as of 31 Dec 64 was: 187.

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1964th Communications Group

Detachment 2, Bien Hoa Air Base

Detachment 3, Pleiku Airport

Detachment 4, Nha Trang, Airport

Detachment 5, Da Nang Airport

Detachment 7, Can Tho Airport

1965th Communications Squadron, Don Muang

Detachment 1, Korat Airfield

Detachment 2, Takli Air Base

Detachment 3, Ubon Airfield

Detachment 4, Udorn Air Base

Telecommunications Division

The main mission of the telecommunications division during the period 1 July through 31 Dec 64 was to provide the Commander, 2d Air Div with required administrative and tactical telephone, teletype and radio communications. To accomplish the task, the Telecommunicat-  
188.  
ions Division (TC) had three primary operating sections:

Radio Operations Section

Teletype Operations Section

Base Communications Operations Section

Radio Operations

The radio Operations section provided tactical command control,

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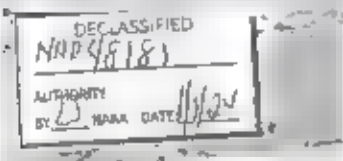
point-to-point and ground-to-air communications throughout Southeast Asia in support of 2d Air Div. It also provided backup facilities for inter and intra-theater communications operated by other agencies and supervised the procurement, installation and maintenance of non-tactical leased vehicular radios for the 2d Air Div. and subordinate units. Radio systems operating under the Radio Operations section are described below.

PACAF Command Control SSB Radio network, provided command control communications for CINCPACAF, subordinate commanders and selected tactical aircraft. The 1964th Comm Gp operated two stations in the network, one at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in South Vietnam and the other at Don Muang Air Base in Thailand. The two stations were members of the PACAF NET 3 and use Collins KWM-2A transceivers.

Another system was the USAF Aeronautical Stations at Don Muang, Thailand and Tan Son Nhut, South Vietnam. The two stations provided enroute and terminal HF Air/Ground Communications operating in the Saigon and Bangkok flight information regions, relaying flight plans, clearances and enroute and terminal weather forecasts. The system also provided liaison between MATS aircraft and the MATS Far East Airlift Command Post. As in the PACAF Command Control SSB Radio network, the equipment utilized in this system was Collins KWM-2A transceivers.

A third system was the Plot-Tell Network, a Southeast Asia tactical network which provided HF SSB communications between the Tan

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Son Nhut Combat Reporting Center and Combat Reporting Points in Vietnam  
192.  
and Thailand.

The STARCOM Back-up system provided a back-up capability for the  
DCA/STARCOM High Frequency point-to-point SSB system Saigon to Clark,  
193.  
utilizing one AN/MSC-96 Communications Central.

Another system under the radio operations section was the TROP  
Back-up. This system provided a back-up capability for the US Army  
operated Southeast Asia TROPO scatter communications system. Its  
equipment consisted of AN/TSC-15 Communications Central located at  
Tan Son Nhut, Nha Trang, Da Nang and Pleiku in South Vietnam and at  
194.  
Ubon, Thailand.

In June 64, a Radar Cross Tell exercise was initiated between  
Tan Son Nhut and elements of the US 7th Fleet. This was directed by  
the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam and provided communications  
between the fleet task group and the Tan Son Nhut Combat Reporting  
Center. This system became extremely valuable during the Gulf of  
Tonkin air strikes were to prove so again during early 1965 as the  
result of VC provocation against US personnel in Southeast Asia.  
Initially the traffic for this system was passed over the Plot Tell  
circuit; however, frequency saturation made it necessary to separate  
the Cross Tell from the Plot Tell. Accordingly a separate circuit  
was established employing alternate frequencies authorized by  
Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Directive 105-4 and utilized  
195.  
the AN/TSC-51 Communications Central.

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In Aug 64, 2d Air Div imposed a requirement to establish a voice/teletype circuit between Udorn, Thailand and Tan Son Nhut. This was a direct result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents and the contingency build-up in Thailand. The circuit was developed to support increased air activity in Southeast Asia. A Communications Central mobile radio van (AN/TSC-15) was utilized to fulfill the requirement. 196.

Another system was established in the same month to establish a Positive Control Circuit (Go-No-Go) between Tan Son Nhut and units at bases in Thailand. The circuit was controlled by the 2d Air Div Command Post and restricted to tactical operational use only. A KWM-2A Transceiver system was installed to satisfy this requirement. 197.

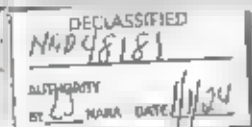
Of all the sections under the Radio Operations Section, the PACAF Command Control SSB Radio Network (Night Watch Net) at Tan Son Nhut became the first station in the history of this network to achieve an operating efficiency rating of 100 per cent. This rating was attained during July and Aug 64, and was chosen as the number one station in Net 3 for the year 1964. 198.

Traffic in the respective systems during the six month period, 1 July through 31 Dec 64 were: 199.

PACAF Command Control SSB

<u>Patches Sent</u>	<u>Patches Rec</u>	<u>Messages Sent</u>	<u>Messages Rec</u>
2661	1759	37	35
	<u>Ground/Air Station</u>		
10	23	2045	2792

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Plot-Tel Network

<u>Patches Sent</u>	<u>Patches Rec</u>	<u>Messages Sent</u>	<u>Messages Rec</u>
1406	1841	228	518

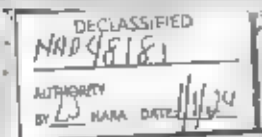
Operations on the STARCOM Back-up Circuit terminated on 10 Sep 64 when the AN/MRC-92 mobile van became operational. The AN/TSC-15 van was placed on operational standby status. Traffic for the period 1 July through 10 Sep 64 were:

<u>Patches Sent</u>	<u>Patches Rec</u>	<u>Messages Sent</u>	<u>Messages Rec</u>
524	260	2	2

Non-Tactical Leased Radio Systems

Increased USAF activities in Southeast Asia as the result of the Gulf of Tonkin raids generated the expansion of existing non-tactical radio systems and created new requirements for the systems at strategic installations. New systems ordered during the last six months of 1964 were Fire and Crash systems at Ubon (new), Korat (new), Don Muang (new), Da Nang (increase) and Bien Hoa (increase). Security system were required at Bien Hoa (increase) Tan Son Nhut (increase) Da Nang (increase) and Don Muang (new). The final requirements for new systems were for maintenance expediter systems at Da Nang (increase), Bien Hoa (increase), 2d Air Div Command Post (increase) and for the National Campaign Plan at Tan Son Nhut (increase).

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### Teletype Operations

Under the teletype Operations Branch were the Minor Relay Communications Center, the Weather Relay Center, the MATS Communications Center and the Air Operations Communications Center. The Minor Relay station passed messages via electrical means between locations that have no direct teletype communications capabilities. This also meant relaying of all messages destined for delivery outside South Vietnam and acceptance of all teletype traffic originated world-wide intended for organizations in South Vietnam and Thailand, and also acted as a transfer point for all Air Force originated traffic addressed to Army units.

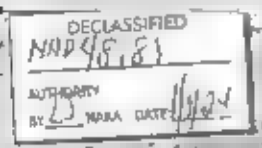
Teletype circuits activated in the last six month of 1964 by the 1964th Coms Gp Minor Relay Branch included:

AF Minor Relay, Tan Son Nhut

- 1 FDX secure to DCS Relay Saigon-Aug 64
- 1 FDX secure to Base Com, Tan Son Nhut - Aug 64
- 1 FDX secure to Udon, Thailand, Aug 64
- 1 FDX in-house relay floor to service section Sep 64
- 1 FDX secure to Army Support Command TSN, Oct 64
- 1 FDX secure to Don Muang, Thailand Nov 64
- 1 FDX secure to 2AD Command Post, Dec 64

Those teletype circuits activated for the 1965 Communications Squadron included:

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- 1 FDI secure TSN Minor Relay Oct 64
- 1 FDI secure Udon, Thailand Aug 64
- Det 3, 1965th Communications Squadron
- 1 FDI secure TSN Minor Relay Aug 64
- 1 FDI secure Takli, Thailand Aug 64
- 1 FDI secure Da Nang, RVN Aug 64
- 1 FDI secure Korat, Thailand Aug 64
- 1 FDI secure Vientiane, Laos Aug 64

The total number of messages handled by the Minor Relay Section in the last six months of 1964 was 979,292 with Dec 64 the highest individual month with 198,016 messages. The monthly average was 163,215 of which 8.9 per cent was service messages. Average installation handling time for the messages was 19.3 minutes and the circuit efficiency was 87.1 per cent over the six month period. 205.

The MATS Communications Teletype Center (MATCOMTEL) was relocated to hangar #3.224 at Tan Son Nhut on 6 July 64 and combined with the USAF Base Operations function. An unsecured on-base pony circuit was installed between that location and the MATS Liaison Office, the primary customer. Because of increased requirements on MATS a spare teletype position was installed in the MATCOMTEL on 5 Nov 64 to preclude equipment outages from affecting circuit deficiencies, and a multiple address processing unit (MAPU) was requested for the MATCOMTEL on 15 Nov 64. 206.

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Between 1 July and 31 Dec 64 the MATS Command Teletype Center processed 87,529 messages, the biggest month in Aug 64 when 16,196 messages were processed. The average number of messages per month was 14,588 with an average in-station handling time of 5.4 minutes and an average circuit efficiency of 83.2 per cent. 207.

Important additions and changes within the Air Operations Center (AOC) Communications Center included circuit changes. Added circuits were: 208.

- 1 Receive only unclassified UPI monitor-15 Aug 64
- 1 FDX secure to III ASOC-10 Nov 64
- 1 FDX secure to Army Support Command TSN-15 Oct 64

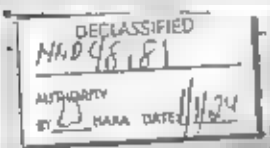
Deleted were:

- 1 FDX secure to III ASOC-10 Oct 64
- 1 FDX secure to Army Support Command TSN-23 Oct 64

The UPI monitor was established to allow dissemination to 2d Air Division offices, the USAF Base Commander and the Commander, 1964th Communications Group. 209.

Another important requirement was established on 5 Dec 64 for a run-off position in the AOC Communications Center to reduce in-station message handling times. An AN/FGC-52 teletypewriter set was transferred there from Technical Control on 15 Dec 64. The teletypewriter was operational at 60 WPM and was held as back-up for the two run-off positions in use and as a station spare for installed circuits. 210.

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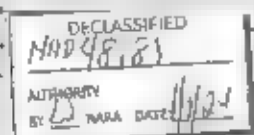
From 1 July to 31 Dec 141,743 messages were handled by the AOC Comm Center for an average of 23,623 per month. November was the largest processing month, 24,626. The average in-station handling time was 24.5 minutes and the circuit effectiveness was 90 per cent. <sup>211.</sup>

The weather Relay Communications Center activated FDX's at Don Muang - Udorn, Oct 64; Don Muang-Takhli, Oct 64 and Don Muang to Korat in Oct 64. Bangkok (VTED) was added to the Master Send Position on 15 Oct 64 because of increased need to furnish bulletins to that location and the Saigon Metro circuit send, only from the weather relay center, was deactivated by the Vietnamese on 21 Nov 64 without prior notice. <sup>212.</sup>

Tests of the Weather Multi Hub Bay in the Weather relay center for simultaneous collection and dissemination to all stations were continued through July 64 with unsuccessful results. Testing was discontinued in Aug 64 after it was determined that the Weather Multi Hub Bay was not compatible with existing circuitry. The locally fabricated Master Send position, installed in Jan 1964, provided a means of selecting any combination of Vietnam and Thailand directly connected stations and simultaneously transmitting to all, and did not interfere with point-to-point operation of any circuit when it is not in use. <sup>213.</sup>

The Weather Relay Center handled 738,010 messages during the reporting period and had a high of 134,712 during the month of October, some 12,700 over the monthly average of 123,000. Circuit efficiency during the period was 93 per cent. <sup>214</sup>

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### Technical Control

Backup capability for circuits to Clark AB, PI, was established in Aug 64 when 4 teletype and one voice channels were installed through Backup capability for circuits to Thailand and Vietnam bases was established in Aug 64 when teletype channels were installed through the TSC-15 system. This provided the capability of establishing teletype circuitry between the Minor Relay Station at Tan Son Nhut and one of the following locations: Udorn, Thailand and Pleiku, Nha Trang or Da Nang, Vietnam. Voice circuits are also available along with teletype whenever point-to-point operation is established. An in-house intercom system was installed between Technical Control and Minor Relay on 25 Nov 64 to facilitate circuit status exchanges. 214.

### 2d Air Div Command Post Communications Center

A requirement was established on 6 Aug 64 for a separate Command Post Communications Center within the confines of 2d Air Div. The reason for the requirement was as the result of the newly established tactical operations directly resulting from the Tonkin Gulf attacks the previous day. The purpose of the circuit was for expeditious handling of aircraft movement messages between command posts and the handling of teleconferences to and from the Commander, 2d Air Div. The new Command Post Communications Center was operational on 9 Aug 64. From the time of activation, traffic had been on a steady increase and by Dec 64 had reached a peak of 2,100 messages per month.

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All local operating procedures were re-written and brought up to date to correspond with actual operations and to cover phases not previously covered. In Nov 64, a revised destruction and fire plan was completed. An additional circuit was activated on 3 Dec 64 to the USAF Minor Relay. At that time the Command Post Communications Center assumed the handling of all SPECAT, Top Secret and Lucky Dragon message. Traffic increased 375 per cent reaching an average monthly load of 8,600 messages.  
216.

One KY-1 was installed in the command post for encrypted voice operation between Command Post and MACV, Saigon in Nov 64.

Another KY-1 is programmed to be installed between the 2d Air Div Command Post and the 34th Tactical Group Command Post at Bien Hoa in Jan or Feb 65.  
217.

#### Flight Facilities

The Tonkin Gulf incidents in August and the overall contingency build-up in Southeast Asia of US forces on a semi-permanent basis at locations in Thailand and South Vietnam required immediate deployment of airfield control towers, GCA's and NAV-AIDS facility and controllers.

The extent of the facility deployment and controller personnel is reflected in the activation of new detachments and a new communications squadron, in addition to the number of facilities and NAV Aids commissioned during the period Aug through Dec 64.  
218.

In October the requirement for a Radar Approach Control service for the Saigon terminal area was recognized and approved by COMUSMACV,

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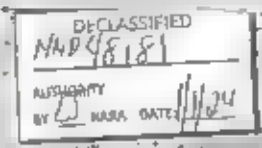
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the State Department and JCS. Programming was initiated on a crash basis with an assigned 1-9 USAF priority. An MPN-16, unit 172 mobile RAPCON arrived on 25 Nov 64 and was flight checked and operational as a fixed GCA on 20 Dec 64. The operational concept of this facility was agreed upon by the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) Republic of Vietnam, COMUSMACV, and VNAF as a Radar Approach facility, with the US assuming the operation responsibility until a sufficient number DCA controllers were trained to assume operational control. VNAF and Vietnamese civilians are undergoing training in the US and should assume responsibility for the station in the first quarter of the calendar year 1966. The actual commissioning date for the Mobile RAPCON is planned for early February. 219.

No problem areas were expected in assuming responsibility for furnishing Radar Approach Control service to the Saigon terminal area. Present Tan Son Nhut control tower operations are averaging 25,000 per month. Conventional approach control service is being provided to 15 per cent of the total under IFR conditions. Eighty per cent of Saigon terminal area traffic is handled during daylight hours. The Radar Approach Control service to be initiated in Feb 64 would provide service to Bien Hoa (VNAF), and Vung Tam(USA) Air Bases in its initial area of responsibility of 36 Nautical mile radius and 5,000 feet altitude. 220.

Emergency deployments and commissioning of NAV-AIDS and ATC facilities in Thailand were required by contingency operations plans

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with the deployment of US Forces into the theater. This was done with the first and third Mobile AFCS Groups. Later this became the 1965th Comm Squadron and its four detachments. Those on a TDY status were being replaced by PCS controller personnel on a programmed basis to provide continuity of operation and an orderly timed rotation of personnel.  
221.

ATC facilities under the operational control of the 1964th Comm Group accounted for 20,173 GCA approaches in Vietnam/Thailand, and 67,929 control tower operations were accomplished at Pleiku, Can Tho, 222.  
in South Vietnam and Takhli, Thailand.

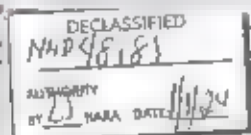
GCA Approaches Jul-Dec 64

Tan Son Nhut	5164
Bien Hoa	1870 (Aug-Dec)
Pleiku	1928
Nha Trang	1261
Da Nang	4868
Don Muang	2454
Korat	1208 (Oct-Dec)
Takhli	1210 (Aug-Dec)
Udon	209 (Nov-Dec)

Control Tower Ops Jul-Dec 64

Pleiku	27,626
Can Tho	26,333
Takhli	13,970

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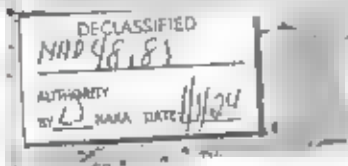
Military/Civilian towers in Vietnam/Thailand where the 1964th Comm Group furnished USAF controller advisors and working augmentee personnel during the last six months of 1964 were Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa, Nha Trang, and Da Nang in South Vietnam and Don Muang, Korat, Takli and Udorn in Thailand.

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As the build-up in Southeast Asia continued to increase, the support units in South Vietnam and Thailand seemed to operate and function successfully no matter how austere and difficult the situation became. New demands were placed on all sections and the increased effort against the Communist Viet Cong caused more and more austere and necessary programs. As personnel strength increased so did the mission and new programs were already in the making.

In Thailand the main job was to build-up and prepare, a contingency effort which taxed all areas. In South Vietnam, the increase air war against the Viet Cong saw new aircraft and increased flying requirements. Some contingency plans were still in the initial stages. The outlook for solving problems that at one time seemed hopeless was beginning to look brighter. No matter how great the problem became, the Air Force units throughout Southeast Asia rallied to overcome them. The last six months of 1964 saw expansion in all areas, and although greatly over-taxed, all seemed to be on the upswing and in far better shape materiel-wise than in Jan 64.

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## CHAPTER II

### USAF ORGANIZATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

#### Introduction

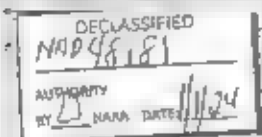
The structure of the U.S. Air Force in Southeast Asia was in the early stages of a huge build-up at the end of Dec 64, but during the previous six months only a few major organizational changes had been made.

With the contingency build-up as the result of the Tonkin Gulf incidents in August, tactical forces were swept into the two countries to bolster defenses and provide a tactical deterrent force to strike north if required. All the tactical squadrons of high performance fighter bombers and air defense aircraft were on temporary duty status from Japan, Clark AFB, PI, Okinawa and some units from as far away as bases in the United States. All these units were self supporting, with maintenance and rated personnel being supplied by the parent units and rotated after three, four or sometimes six months intervals. Local bases supplied ordinary housekeeping requirements.

The basic changes in Southeast Asia as the result of the stepped up U.S. Air Force participation in South Vietnam and Thailand were units at Bien Hoa, Tan Son Nhut and Da Nang. In Thailand, the only major structural change was that of the unit at Udorn which was given a permanent Air Base Squadron designation.

An important addition to the active tactical mission of the U.S. Air Force in South Vietnam was the arrival of another A-1E Skyraider

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squadron and a fourth C-123 Provider squadron. The most valuable addition in SEA in regards to units flying missions in South Vietnam and Thailand was that of the much needed professional air/sea rescue capability. This was initiated in South Vietnam in Aug 64 and had already been available in Thailand on a limited basis.

Throughout the period there was a steady increase in personnel spaces authorizations in both Thailand and South Vietnam. This was mainly because of the increased mission as the result of the Tonkin Gulf, but a main manning package for a full-scale increase did not develop until Dec 64 when a unit manning document suggested change went through channels to USAF. It was not approved until late Apr 65.

Limited changes were submitted by various organizations as they were needed during the last six months of the year and strength figures related these changes as they were approved.

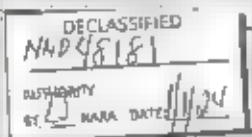
The main structural changes in the 2d Air Division during the last half of 1964 were at Bien Hoa Air Base.

#### Bien Hoa

Bien Hoa was the only completely tactical air base in South Vietnam and is located some 17 miles northwest of Saigon. During the latter

\* Authorized and Assigned figures for South Vietnam and Thailand are listed in the personnel section of Vol III of this history.

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part of 1964 many changes were seen at that key installation including the build-up of the 34th Tactical Group. As the new A-1E Sky-raider began to arrive in numbers, the group was broken down into a double deputy system with two fighter squadrons. At the end of June the only fighter squadron at Bien Hoa was the 1st Air Commando Squadron. The 602d Air Commando Squadron was added in Oct 64. As a result of the buildup in South Vietnam and Southeast Asia, the 19th Tactical Support Squadron, which was ordered deactivated in Aug 64 was reorganized in Oct 64. In early 1965, the commander of the 34th Tactical Group announced plans for further reorganization of the group as the result of a still greater build-up.

In early Aug 64, immediately after the Gulf of Tonkin incidents, elements of the 8th and 15th Bomb Squadrons from the 405th Fighter Bomber Wing at Clark AB in the Philippine Islands arrived at Bien Hoa. On 5 Aug 64 40, B-57 Canberra jet bombers departed Clark, 39 arriving at Bien Hoa. The 40th aircraft was destroyed in a crash some 10 miles north of the base. Another of the B-57s was seriously damaged on arrival at Bien Hoa itself and was salvaged. The aircraft lost were later supplemented by 13th Air Force. In late Oct 64, 20 of the B-57's were transferred back to the Philippines for training purposes. Of the remaining 20 at Bien Hoa, five were destroyed, and eight seriously damaged in a Viet Cong mortar attack 1 Nov 64. Immediately after the damaged planes were repaired, all the B-57's were ordered back to Clark AB and in the later part of Nov, 10 returned to Bien Hoa and

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remained there on a contingency basis for the remainder of the re-  
 \*223  
 porting period.

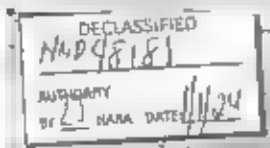
19th Tactical Support Squadron

The 19th Tactical Support Squadron (19th TASS), which was organized at Bien Hoa 8 Jul 1963 to assist in the National Campaign Plan in South Vietnam, was ordered deactivated 8 Aug 64 by PACAF Special Order G-100, 31 Jul 64. During the period of operation beginning in Jul 63 the 19th TASS had two missions, one of which was to train VNAF pilots and observers in the O-1F aircraft and the other was to participate in combat support missions in South Vietnam including combat observation, psychological warfare, aircraft escort duty, troop escort, and forward air control. The 19th TASS mission in regards to the National Campaign Plan was directed toward VNAF "Aspirants" in pilot training and these Vietnamese Air Force personnel were extensively trained in all aspects of flying the O-1F aircraft. Also included were comprehensive training in navigation, forward air control pro-  
 224.  
 cedures, and rocket firing techniques.

The Observer Aspirants received well-rounded training in navigation, target and troop identification, intelligence estimating, visual reconnaissance methods, and procedures to direct and control  
 225.  
 air strikes.

\* The contingency buildup is further explained in Vol II, 2d AD History Jul - Dec 64.

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The U.S. pilots assigned to the 19th TASS continued to function in two capacities, instructors and forward air controllers. Some pilots of the 19th TASS were deployed to other airfields throughout Vietnam where they supplemented the VNAF O-1As in directing combat air strikes. 226.

In reference to the deactivation of the 19th TASS, Col. William E. Bethes, Commander of the 34th Tactical Group, Bien Hoa Air Base discussed the situation stating: 227.

"...when I arrived as commander in the middle of June I was told at that time that the 19th TASS, that is the 19th Tactical Support Squadron, would phase out and at the same time that I was told this, I was told verbally that it probably would not phase out but drag your feet on anything. Shortly thereafter, effective on the 8th of July I received an order which deactivated the 19th TASS. However, I was instructed by 2d Air Div not to de-activate it, as they were going to try to do their best to try to keep it in being. So they started transferring people out, the pipeline was cut off, I didn't get any more mechanics in or any more pilots in, I did however, get two more classes in which I was required to train even though my instructor pilots were beginning to fall off and go down. We continued in a state of limbo until somewhere in October, when it was decided that the 19th TASS would definitely stay in being..."

The 19th TASS was ordered back to active duty on 21 Oct 64 by Special Order C-125, Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, dated 19 Oct 64. 228.

Immediately the pipeline for maintenance personnel and pilots was reinstated and it wasn't until Jan 65 that the first six pilots

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arrived officially re-establishing the personnel pipeline system. At one point the squadron, which was authorized 44 officers and five enlisted men, was down to nine officers and one enlisted man for the twenty-four aircraft assigned. The only way the squadron continued to operate during this period was by checking out Air Liaison Officers (ALO's) and Forward Air Controller (FAC's) of the different ASOCs who took over the 19th TASS portion of the 2d Air Division mission for 229, providing forward air controllers for the units in the field.

The training of ALO's and FAC's included a minimum of fifteen hours of flying training and a thorough ground school on the O-1F and forward air control procedures. It was a two-phase course, consisting of six flights concerned only with flying the O-1F itself. The second phase of the flight training included four flights to train the pilot in low-level navigation, target location using UTM grid, forward air controlling, escort techniques, visual reconnaissance 230. methods and target marking procedures.

The authorized strength for the 19th TASS of 22 aircraft was supplemented by two attrition aircraft, two aircraft were lost during Nov and Dec 64 bringing the aircraft on hand down to the authorized strength. In Dec 64 it was approved that the 19th TASS would receive eight additional aircraft to bring the authorized total to 30 aircraft. Colonel William E. Bethas, commander, 34th Tactical Group stated, "I also see the 19th TASS being expanded, not only to 30 aircraft but possibly to 40 or 45 aircraft in the future." 231.

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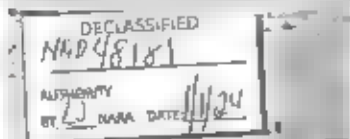
602d Fighter Squadron (Commando)

The 602d Fighter Squadron, Commando, was assigned to PACAF on 1 Oct 64, from TAC and was further assigned to the 34th Tactical Group at Bien Hoa on 18 Oct 64, on PACAF Special Order G-130, 3 Nov 232. 64. The squadron was originally assigned to the 34th Tac Gp on PACAF Special Order G-116, 24 Sep 64. 233. The assignment of the squadron to PACAF was in accordance with Air Force Regulation 20-27, Hq USAF Message AFOAFDC 69065, 2 Sep 64 and Headquarters Tactical Air Command Movement Order 5, dated 8 Sep 64. 234.

The 602d Fighter Squadron, Commando was assigned to the 34th Tactical Group at Bien Hoa as the second of two A-1E Skyraider Squadrons to be utilized in the training of Vietnamese Air Force fighter pilots and the augmentation of the Vietnamese Air Force strike capability against the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. The unit, was authorized 57 officers and 9 airmen. At the end of Dec 64 the squadron was still not at top strength and had 31 officers and two airmen assigned. 235.

The activation of the squadron at Bien Hoa was due to the increased mission in South Vietnam and personnel for the squadron were drawn from the resources of the 34th Tactical Group. The original strength when the squadron was activated was 20 officers of the US Air Force and VNAF student pilots. During the last two and a half months of 1964 the 602d flew 50 per cent of its missions in support of the VNAF training program and 50 per cent in air strikes against the Viet Cong in support of the VNAF strike capabilities. 236.

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The training program established by the 602d Fighter Squadron for instructing young VNAP officers consisted of three phases, (1) familiarization, transition, and solo checkout of the A-1E, (2) further transition, formation, and introduction to gunnery, (3) and transition, instruments, formation and air combat maneuvers. Most flying training during the period 18 Oct to 31 Dec 64 was in Phase III missions. A minimum of two transition, three instrument, three formation, two air combat maneuvers, and eight ordnance sorties made up the final phase of the student training. Most student pilots, however, were given a minimum of 25 hours, the additional time being devoted to ordnance delivery, where the student gained proficiency in the accurate deployment of practice bombs and 20mm cannons.

237.

#### Planned Bien Hoa Reorganization

Colonel William E. Behtea, commander of the 34th Tactical Group indicated that many plans for changes in the structure of the 34th Tactical Group were being planned. He stated:

238.

"...I also have envisioned stripping the first Air Command Squadron of the C-47s and U-10s. I have a paper in the mill right now on this, and making the First Air Commandos and the 602d Air Commandos strictly A-1E Fighter Squadrons, putting the 19th TASS, the cats and dogs mission, that's the Tactical Air Support Squadron, give them the C-47 aircraft, the U-10s and the L-19s

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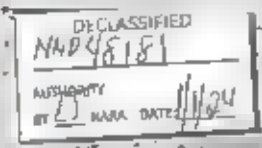
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The colonel also noted other planned changes and additions to Bien Hoa. He stated that a Joint Operations Center, would be completed in the first part of 1965. This was to be in the vicinity of the flight line operation and would have a combined operations center, both ground and air operations, which would include the Vietnamese 23d Wing Operations, the 34th Tac Gp Operations and Major Anh's, Base Commander Ground Defense Unit all in one building. The operations center would have a Director of Operations office manned by a Vietnamese and U.S. Air Force Officer representing the 23d Wing Commander of the Vietnamese Air and the commander 34th Tactical Group. There would also be a joint intelligence section, a joint plans section and a joint debriefing room. The operations section was to be completely secure and air conditioned.<sup>239.</sup>

In discussing the new operations section which was to open in late Jan 65 or early Feb., Colonel Bethen said:<sup>240</sup>

"...Speaking of the consolidated command post, this will for the first time put the 34th Tac Gp and the 23d Vietnamese Tactical Fighter Wing, so to speak, in bed together. We will have to start planning together, briefing together on our missions. The same will go for intelligence. We will get much closer together with the Vietnamese and we will start to get adequate intelligence, something that we have never gotten out of 2d Air Division. The most up-to-date intelligence I ever get out of 2d Air Division is three to five days old.. The VNAF get it within 12-14 hours..."

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The Colonel also discussed plans for revamping his own facility in an effort to improve working conditions and increase his group's tactical efficiency. He said on this subject:

"...When I arrived I had a very cumbersome working organization. But, however, did work for four or five hundred people. As the organization grew it became completely unwieldy and I reorganized it under a double deputy system. A Deputy Commander for Operations which I put the Command Post, Stan/Eval and the tactical squadrons with the consolidated intelligence section. Then a Deputy Commander for Material that I saddled with base defense, and the Consolidated Maintenance and the Air Base Squadron. However, we have grown in size until again I am going to have to reorganize under the Deputy Commander for Material and break the CAMRON Squadron into three separate squadrons. Put the Chief of Maintenance in Maintenance Control on a staff level under the Deputy Commander for Material. I plan to break the CAMRON Squadron into a Flight Line Maintenance Squadron, a Field Maintenance Squadron and a Periodic Maintenance Squadron. Then I plan to form the rest of the group into an Air Police Squadron, an Air Base Squadron and possibly a Food Service Squadron..."

#### Detachment 4, Pacific Air Rescue Center

One of the two air/sea rescue organizations established in South Vietnam, Detachment 4, Pacific Air Rescue Center was activated at Bien Hoa on 20 October 1964 and was equipped with H-43F helicopters. This detachment replaced a TDY unit consisting of three H-43B helicopters

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which arrived at Bien Hoa on 14 Aug 64. The organization was activated in accordance with Headquarters MATS Special Order GO-131, 16 Aug 64 and the squadron was equipped with three H-43F helicopters specifically modified for use in Southeast Asia. These helicopters were equipped with heavy armor plating to protect themselves from hostile ground fire and 250 foot cables to affect rescues in high rain forest areas. The unit also had available, rotational HH-16 flying boats to be used for sea rescue of downed pilots. The actual arrival of the permanent unit was 22 Oct 64 and two of the H-43F aircraft plus three H-43B were on hand. After assembling the new "F" model aircraft they became operational 25 Oct 64. The third aircraft arrived at Bien Hoa on 2 Nov 64 and the unit was completely operational on 5 Nov 64. The H-43B aircraft were then transferred to rescue organizations in Thailand. 242.

The need for an Air Rescue unit in Southeast Asia became evident in the early part of 1964 when Army and Marine units were asked to carry out much needed air rescue missions. When these units attempted rescues of down US Air Force and Vietnamese Air Force pilots in heavy rain forest, several helicopters crashed and more men were lost in the rescue attempts. The same thing happened in sea rescue and night rescue. A plea was made by several staff officers within 2d Air Division for specialized rescue aircraft and personnel. These specialized personnel arrived on the scene in Aug 64 and were then assigned permanently to South Vietnam. 243.

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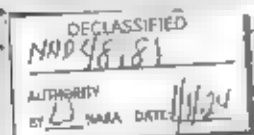
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# Da Nang

At Da Nang, some 350 miles north of Saigon, the only major organizational change during the last six months of 1964 was the organization of an air/sea rescue unit at that base. As at Bien Hoa in South Vietnam, the unit was first brought into the country on a temporary basis on 14 Aug 64, bringing with it three H-43B helicopters. On 20 Oct 64 the TDY unit was replaced by Detachment 5, Pacific Air Rescue Center. The new unit was organized by Special Order G-131, 10 Aug 64, Hq MATS, and the first PCS personnel were on station on 24 Oct 64 with three H-43F helicopters equipped with armor plating and 250 foot cables for rain forest rescue operations. The TDY H-43B helicopters were transferred to Thailand.

In Jun 64, the first elements of TDY F-100 Super Sabres were introduced at Da Nang on a TDY rotational basis and these aircraft at that time were utilized mainly for support mission for RF-101's over Laos. After the Tonkin Gulf incidents, these eight aircraft were augmented by additional F-100's which operated under a two-fold mission, air support for reconnaissance over Laos and air defense & free strike capabilities in South Vietnam in case of air attack by North Vietnamese or Chinese Communist aircraft. The number of TDY aircraft differed from time to time depending on the requirements at Da Nang. At one point in Sep 64, 27, F-100's were on hand, and 26 in Oct 64. The figures changed in Nov, 18 and only 15 in Dec 64. These figures were to change drastically in early 1965 as the war in South Vietnam

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and the airstrikes in North Vietnam began employing high performance aircraft.  
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#### Tan Son Nhut

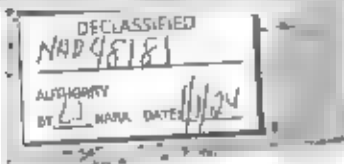
The only organizational change at Tan Son Nhut was the addition of the 19th Air Commando Squadron, attached to the 315th Troop Carrier Group. Special Order G-114, 18 Sep 64, Hq PACAF activated the C-123 Provider Squadron 8 October 1964 and it became the fourth such squadron in South Vietnam. This paved the way for the 310th Air Transport Squadron to leave Tan Son Nhut for duty at Nha Trang in early 1965. As were the other C-123 squadrons, 16 aircraft arrived during Oct and Nov 64 bringing the C-123 total at the end of Dec 64 to 77 including attrition aircraft.  
246.

#### Thailand

The only major changes in organization in Thailand was the 1964th Communications Group and the redesignation of Detachment 1 and 2 of the 35th Tactical Group at Udorn.

The physical structure of the 1964th Communications Group, which had its headquarters at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in South Vietnam, changed as the contingency build-up in Thailand increased beyond all expectations.

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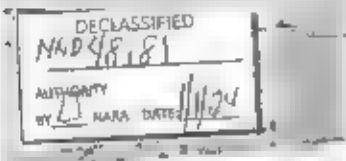
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From an ordinary group with six detachments, three of them being located at Don Muang, Udorn and Ubon, Thailand, the Group was re-organized to operate with five detachments in South Vietnam and a squadron with four detachments in Thailand. On 1 Oct 64, Detachment 1 of the 1964th Communications Group was redesignated as the 1965th Communications Squadron with its headquarters at Don Muang Air Base, Thailand. Directly under the 1965th Comm Squadron were Detachments 1-Korat, 2-Takhli, 3-Ubon and Detachment 4 at Udorn. Detachment 3, which was originally Detachment 6 of the 1964th Comm Group, and Detachment 1 and 2 were organized 1 Oct 64 and Detachment 4 at Udorn was operational 1 Nov 64.<sup>247</sup>

All Detachments of the 35th Tactical Group located at Udorn Airfield in Thailand were redesignated to the 333d Air Base Squadron 18 Oct 64, giving all bases, Udorn, Ubon, Don Muang and Takhli an Air Base Squadron with the exception of Korat which remained Detachment 1, 35th Tactical Group. The 333d Air Base Squadron was designated in accordance with PACAF Special Order G-124, 15 Oct 64 with the effective date of 18 Oct 64. Under this order, the 333d AB Sq remained assigned to the 35th Tactical Group at Don Muang.<sup>248</sup>

As a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents, the build-up in Thailand was evident by the increased arrival of several temporary duty units from the U.S., Okinawa, Japan and Clark AFB, to add to the capability of the 2d Air Division contingency strength. Temporary duty organizations were on duty at Takhli, Korat, Udorn and Nakhon Phanom.

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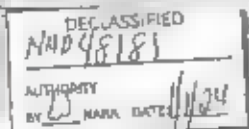
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At Takhlī, beginning in Aug 64, three detachments from various fighter squadrons located in the Far East and U.S. arrived along with the 421st Air Refueling Squadron and Detachment 4 of the 36th Air Rescue Squadron. At the end of Dec 64, rotational TDY squadrons at Takhlī included 613th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Detachment 1, 3d Tactical Fighter Squadron, and the 416th Tactical Fighter Squadron. 249.

When the contingency build-up began at Korat, only 14 personnel from the 35th Tactical Group at Don Muang were on duty there. These men were assigned to Detachment 1, 35th Tac Gp. Also assigned were communications personnel from the 1st Mobile Comm Group which was then assigned to the 1964th Comm Group at Tan Son Nhut. In Aug 64, immediately following the Gulf of Tonkin episode, 18 F-105 aircraft of the 35th Tactical Fighter Squadron arrived at Korat with some 176 officers and airmen assigned. In Oct 64 the 1st Mobile team was redesignated and supplemented as Detachment 1, 1965th Communications Squadron. Also assigned to Korat on a TDY basis was a detachment from the 1st Weather Wing, WESTAF MATS. All these units were still occupying Korat at the end of Dec 64. 250.

In the last six months of the year, a new base was used by the U.S. in a contingency build-up against Communist forces and also as a front line air rescue organization. In early Jun Rescue 2, a small air/sea rescue unit was made up of 36 personnel attached to Nakhon Phanom, just 10 miles from the Laotian border, equipped with two H-43B helicopters. The element of the Pacific Air Rescue Center,

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was the first US Air Force air sea rescue unit to be assigned in Thailand. Also assigned on a TDY basis to Nakhon Phanom in Sep 64 was a unit of the 1st Mobile Comm Group. It was placed on TDY for communications effectiveness in the most eastern Thai base. More billets were required in early Sep 64 as Detachment 3, 507 Communications and Control Group, an early warning radar unit, moved into Nakhon Phanom with some 170 personnel. All three units were still located at NP at the end of Dec 64 and further build-up of forces at that base was forthcoming.<sup>251.</sup>

Along with the designation of the 333d Air Base Squadron at Udorn and the establishment of Detachment 4, 1965th Communications Squadron, Detachment 4 of the 619th Tactical Control Squadron was established on 18 Oct 64. On the same day, Detachment 8, 8th Aerial Port Squadron<sup>252.</sup> was also established at that base. The only other change at Udorn was the PCS assignment of Col. Jack H. McGreevy, Deputy Commander of 2d Air Division who became the head of the 2d Air Division ASOC, 10 Aug 64, at that base, controlling 2d Air Division interests in Laos and Thailand under a tactical Air Operations concept. He had under his direct control, temporary duty F-100s at Takli and F-105s at Korat.<sup>253.</sup>

The build-up in Thailand could be seen directly after the Tonkin Gulf. Only fifteen aircraft were in Thailand at the time excluding air/sea rescue, and at the end of Dec 64 there were 45 assigned plus an additional seven H-43B helicopters and two UH-16 flying boats.

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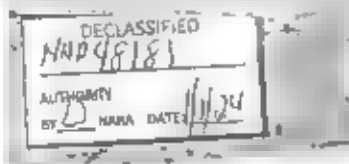
A further build-up in that country was forthcoming in early 1965 as the war against the Communists in Southeast Asia widened and the contingency build-up became more important in the eyes of the Thai government.

#### Manpower

As the air war in South Vietnam and the contingency effort in Thailand enlarged, the entire structure of the US Air Force in the Southeast Asia area changed, but the formal up-dating of this change was not to be seen until early 1965. In the last six months of 1964, manpower figures changed slightly to augment organizations and new authorizations were received for several new units. The main change in the organizations structure of the entire 2d Air Division was broken down in a manpower package submitted for approval to Headquarters USAF in Dec 64. Formal approval for the package was expected in South Vietnam sometime in Apr 65. During the period temporary duty personnel filled proposed slots and the 2d Air Division mission was successfully carried out.

Normal attrition figures changed in South Vietnam and in Thailand during the last six months of the year. On 1 Jul 64 Thailand had 60 officers authorized, 619 enlisted and 83 civilians, mostly local nationals. At the end of the year the authorized strength was 106 officers, 1,447 enlisted and no civilians. This figure of 1,553

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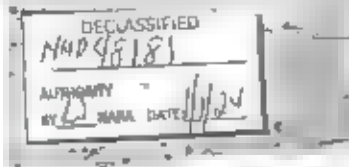
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authorized more than doubled the 770 total for 1 Jul 65. The assigned strength at that time was 53 officers, 522 enlisted and 103 civilians for a 678 total plus 283 TDY personnel. On 31 Dec 64, the assigned strength totaled 66 officers and 743 enlisted for a total of 800 of the authorized 1,553. TDY strength figures had risen to 210 officers and 1,700 enlisted and two civilians for a total of 1,912. Combined strength figures were 2,712 assigned or attached. This was far more than the authorized 1,553 figure but many of the TDY personnel were attached to rotational TDY fighter squadrons which would never be included on the Thailand UMD and would be rotated periodically with new aircraft and personnel from their parent bases in Japan, Okinawa, Clark and the United States. 254.

In South Vietnam, the 1 Jul 64 authorized strength was 630 officers and 3,016 enlisted with 741 officers actually assigned and 3,786 enlisted. Authorized totals had jumped to 975 officers and 4,411 enlisted in December and the assigned strength was 695 officers and 4,753 enlisted. There were an additional 138 officers and 1,515 enlisted in South Vietnam on a TDY basis, but as in Thailand, many of these personnel were attached to TDY rotational bomber and fighter squadrons on duty in the republic. Although the strength assigned was greater than the authorized strength the newly proposed manning document included many of these spaces. 255.

The entire manpower increase requested in December for 2d Air Division units in Thailand and South Vietnam included 1,033 spaces in

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South Vietnam and 672 spaces in Thailand. The two largest requested changes were for the two main tactical groups in South Vietnam. An additional 235 spaces including 20 officers, 8 civilians and 207 enlisted were requested for the 33d Air Base Squadron at Tan Son Nhut. The 34th Air Base Squadron at Bien Hoa required 9 additional officer slots, 197 enlisted and 9 local national civilians. The 23d Air Base Squadron at Da Nang required 165 new spaces including eight officers, 145 enlisted and 12 local national civilians. The high total for Thailand was at the 35th Tactical Group's detachment at Korat which required 265 additional slots including 11 officers, 224 enlisted and 30 local national civilians. The second high total in Thailand was required by the 331st Air Base Squadron at Takli where 100 new spaces were asked. This request included 3 officers, 94 enlisted and 3 national civilians. The 35th Air Base Squadron at Don Muang asked for 5 new officers slots and 81 airmen, along with 10 national civilians for a total of 96 new spaces.

The overall breakdown of requested spaces by organization in the December package was:

South Vietnam

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Civilian</u>	<u>Total</u>
Hq 2d Air Div (TSN)	43	45	6	94
33d Taw Gp (TSN)	2	30	0	32
33d AB Sq (TSN)	20	207	8	235

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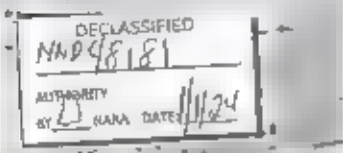
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<u>Organization</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Civilian</u>	<u>Total</u>
33d CAMRON (TSN)	0	8	0	8
34th Tac Gp (BNH)	3	3	0	6
34th AB Sq (BNH)	9	197	9	215
34th CAMRON (BNH)	0	29	0	29
23d AB Sq (DNG)	8	145	12	165
23d CAMRON (DNG)	0	6	0	6
37th AB Gp	2	84	3	89
13th RTS Sq (TSN)	1	35	0	36
619th TCT (TSN)	5	28	0	33
Det 1, 619th (DNG)	3	6	0	9
Det 3, 619th (CTO)	1	9	0	10
Det 1, 34 Tac Gp (PKU)	0	1	0	1
Det 2, 33d Tac Gp (CTO)	1	63	0	64
Det 1, 23d AB Sq (QNH)	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1,033</b>

## Thailand

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Civilian</u>	<u>Total</u>
Dep Cdr 2AD (UDN)	3	1	0	4
35th Tac Gp (DMC)	8	43	6	57

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<u>Organization</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Civilian</u>	<u>Total</u>
35th AB Sq (DME)	5	81	10	96
331st AB Sq (TKL)	3	94	3	100
332d AB Sq (Ubon)	1	5	1	7
333d AB Sq (UDN)	2	34	1	37
NKP Sup Sq	3	43	5	51
Green Hills Sup Sq	1	13	1	15
Det 1, 35th Tac Gp (KHT)	11	224	30	265
Det 2, 619th TCT (UDN)	3	22	0	25
Det 4, 619th TCT (UDN)	3	12	0	15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>672</b>

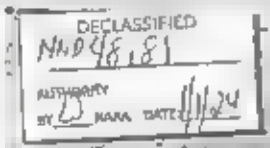
Grand Aggregate Totals

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Civilians</u>	<u>Total</u>
Vietnam	98	897	38	1,033
Thailand	43	572	57	672
	<b>141</b>	<b>1,469</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>1,705</b>

Summary

Although organizational changes were not extensive between Jul and Dec 64, the gradual build-up in Southeast Asia could be seen. TDY units in both Thailand and South Vietnam increased the US strength

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in the theater and the escalation of the war in early 1965 would increase the strength even more.

Gradual build-up of slots at various installations developed between Jul and Dec 64 and major manpower package request included a general build-up in both countries.

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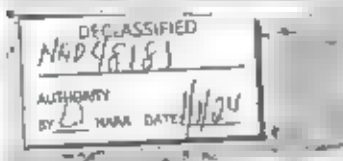
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G L O S S A R Y

AB	Air Base
AB Sq	Air Base Squadron
ADI	Automatic Direction Indicator
ADP	Automatic Data Processing
AF	Air Force
AFC	Air Force Communications
AFCS	Air Force Communications Service
AIK	Aid In Kind
AOC	Air Operations Center
APRFE	Air Procurement Region, Far East
ARVN	Army Republic Vietnam
ATC	Air Traffic Control
ATW	Air Transport Wing
AV-GAS	Aviation-Gasoline
BEMO	Base Equipment Management Office
BLU	Anti-Materiel Bomb
CAS	Chief Admin. Services
Cat	Category
CBFO	Consolidated Base Personnel Office
CBU	Cluster Bomb Unit
CINCPACAF	Commander-in-Chief Pacific Air Force
COIN	Counterinsurgency
COMUSMACV	Commander U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

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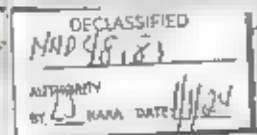


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DCA	Department Civil Aviation
DCS	Defense Communications System
DEROS	Date Estimate Return from Overseas
FD	Full Duplex
FOL	Fuel, Oil, Lubricants
FW	Fighter Wing
FY	Fiscal Year
GCA	Ground controlled Approach
Gp	Group
GSA	General Services Administration
HSAS	Headquarters Support Activity, Saigon
IBM	International Business Machine
IFR	Instrument Flight Rules
IG	Inspector General
ISSA	Interservice Supply Support Agreement
JCS	Joint Chief of Staff
KW	Kilowatt
LCM	Landing Craft Mechanize

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LOX

Liquid Oxygen

LST

Landing Ship Tank

MACV

Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

MAP

Military Aid Program

MATCOMTELNET

MATS Command Teletype Network

MATS Military

Military Air Transport Service

MAFU

Multiple Address Processing Unit

MCP

Military Construction Program

MK-44

Lazy Dog Bomb

MSKs

Mission Support Kits

M/T

Marking Target

NAV-AID

Navigational Aids

NORS

Not Operational Requiring Spares

NWS

Naval Weapons Station

O&amp;M

Operational &amp; Maintenance

O/R

Operational Ready

OSI

Office of Special Investigation

PACAF

Pacific Air Force

PCS

Permanent Change of Station

POL

Petroleum, Oil, Lubricant

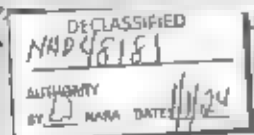
RAPCON

Radar Approach Control

R&amp;M

Redistribution &amp; Marketing

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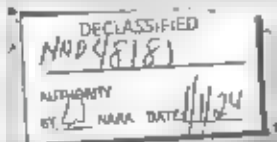


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RMK	Raymond, Morrison & Kindeen
RTAF	Royal Thai Air Force
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
SEA	Southeast Asia
SPECAT	Special Category
SSB	Single Side Band
STAR	Speed Through Aerial Resupply
STTC	Saigon Transportation Terminal Command
Sq Ft	Square Feet
Tac	Tactical
TAFDS	Tactical Air Field Dispensing System
TC	Tactical Control
TDY	Temporary Duty
TFW	Tactical Fighter Wing
TSN	Tan Son Nhut
US	United States
USAF	United States Air Force
VC	Viet Cong
VNAF	Vietnam Air Force
WRM	War Readiness Materiel
WPM	Words Per Minute
ZI	Zone of Interior

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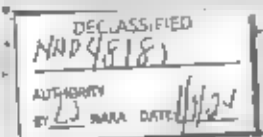
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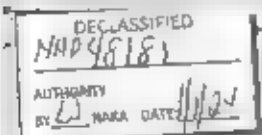


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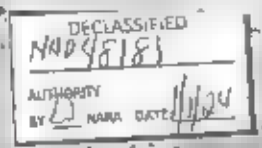


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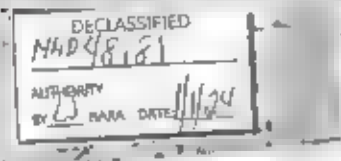


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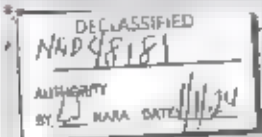


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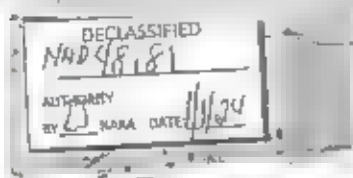
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# HISTORY

## 2<sup>d</sup> AIR DIVISION



**JULY - DECEMBER 1964**

**VOLUME II**

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## FOREWORD

This chapter covers USAF operations in the Republic of Vietnam for the period July through December 1964. Only a broad treatment of the spectrum of USAF operations is attempted here as this subject is also covered by a Top Secret Chapter and special studies on individual areas of activity. Also in addition to semi-annual histories prepared by all 2nd AD groups in SEA, the 315th Air Command Group and parent units of units stationed on temporary duty in SEA prepare histories of their activities.

This history is subject to revision and any suggested corrections or changes will be welcomed.

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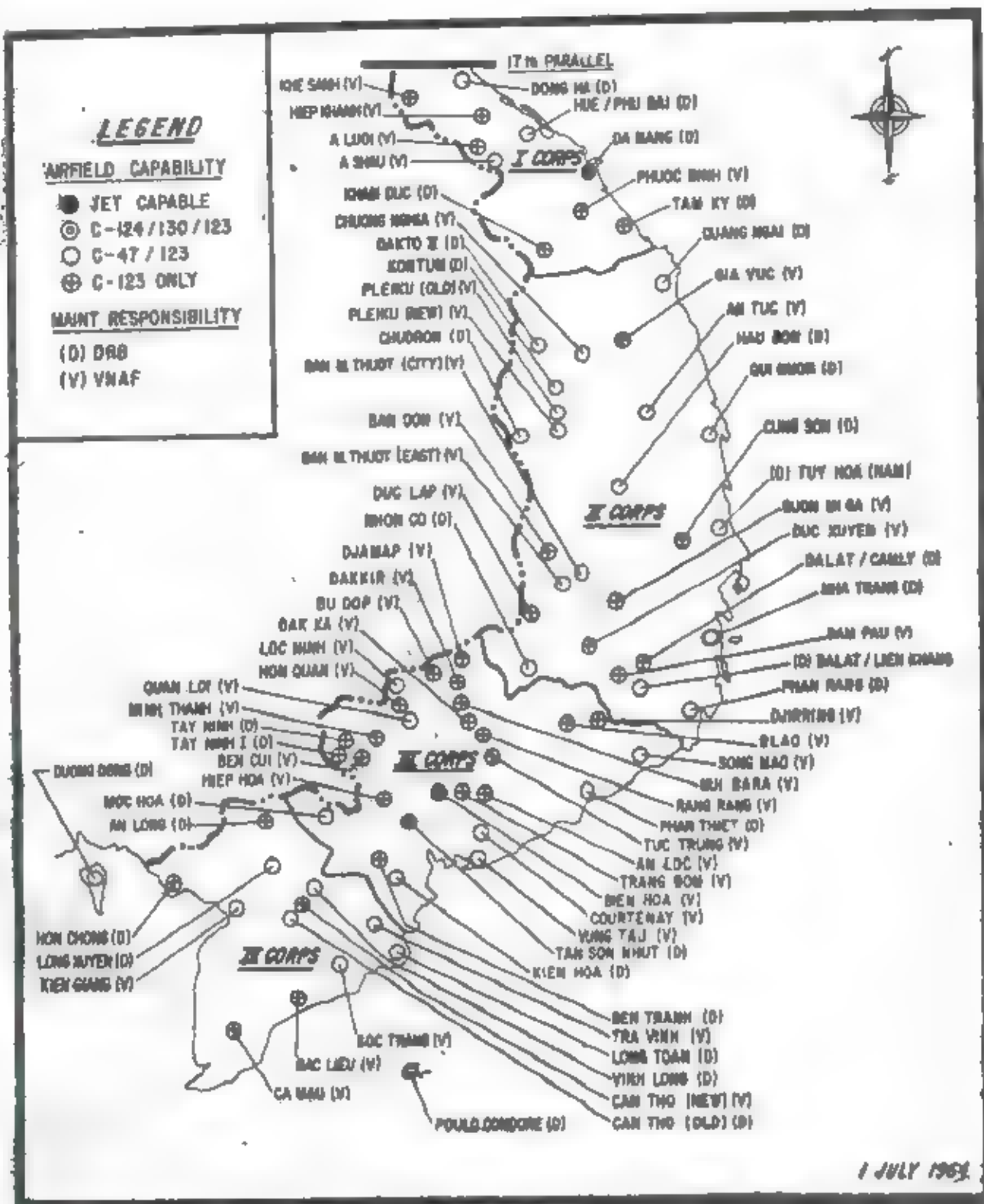


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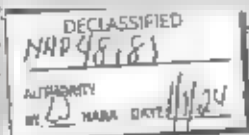
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## CHAPTER III

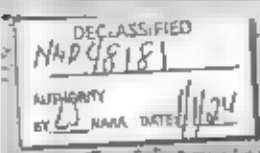
USAF/VNAF OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM

## INTRODUCTION

No six month period had as much impact upon the tactical air role in Vietnam as the months between July and December 1964. A combination of fierce and successful enemy fighting combined with virtual anarchy in the Saigon political scene forced a new look at the U.S. structure in Vietnam and the rules governing its employment. Out of this new look came a greater appreciation for tactical air, which was emerging as an essential and perhaps decisive element of the conflict.

In July, the Viet Cong unleashed a series of savage attacks and ambushes which took the heaviest toll of U.S. and Vietnamese casualties for the year. Striking mainly in the delta area, the enemy, taking advantage of the monsoon weather and the signs of political unrest in Saigon, fought government forces which had a minimum of air support available to them, partly because of a shortage of aircraft and partly because all ground commanders were still not fully appreciative of the value of air support. In one six hour battle fought in Chuong Thien Province on 11 July, only seven USAF/VNAF close air support sorties were flown although the VC were employing a main force battalion plus three local force companies against four ARVN companies. The government lost 58 killed, 72 wounded and 76 missing or captured.<sup>1.</sup>

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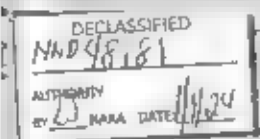
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The 1st Air Commando Squadron at Bien Hoa had an average of 15 A-1E's in July while the VNAF had an average of 64 A-1H's operating in both a training and combat capacity. The VNAF in July flew 823 operational sorties compared to 750 in June while the 1st ACS also increased its A-1E operational sorties from 128 in June to 362 in July. One fourth of the VNAF A-1H's and four A-1E's were used to train VNAF pilots. This upsurge of activity was a response to the sharp increase in enemy initiated incidents as well as an indication of the greater numbers of strike planes available. Air support provided outposts and hamlets more than doubled in July. Also during July, the expanded VNAF/USAF Air Liaison and Forward Air Control system was working satisfactorily III Corps and the 7th Division areas and some progress was being made in implementing the system in IV Corps.

In the reconnaissance area, RB-57 aircraft, equipped with infrared sensors were producing valuable information in July. This information, correlated with other available intelligence, confirmed the location of several Viet Cong positions in Zones "D" and "C".

Heavy fighting carried into August as the bad weather continued and as the political situation in Saigon and the northern cities deteriorated almost to the point of anarchy. Armed with new and better weapons infiltrated from North Vietnam, including 75mm pack howitzer ammunition, the Viet Cong pressed his advantage, using the

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same effective "hit and run" and ambush tactics he had employed in the past.

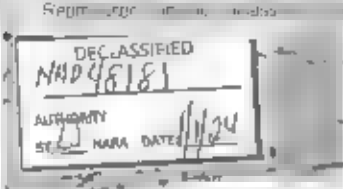
One vicious enemy ambush on 20 Aug 64 ten kilometers north of Ben Tre in Kien Hoa Province was completed in an hour, well before air could arrive at the scene, resulting in 85 friendlies killed (including four Americans) 60 wounded and 91 missing in action.

An average of 26 A-1E's were operating in August as new aircraft continued to arrive from the U.S. while VNAF continued to operate with an average of 64 A-1H's. The number of operational sorties rose again in August, climbing from a total of 1051 VNAF/USAF sorties in July to 1151 in August. VNAF was still employing a large part of its resources in training in order to equip its fourth A-1H squadron, the 520th Fighter Squadron.

The VNAF/USAF Air Liaison and Forward Air Controller System was operating in III and IV Corps and in 7th Division during August. Although there were minor communications problems and a shortage of personnel, the system had improved the effectiveness of close support. It was expected that all locations under the system would be manned by 1 October. As the strike force built up and the control system expanded there was a need to augment the existing force of liaison aircraft. The 2nd AD believed that the existing force of 80 liaison aircraft should be raised to 130.

\* A VC document captured in August in Phu Yen Province made reference to a new enemy policy for use during the autumn-winter campaign. This called for "clinging to the enemy, a tactic that was to materialize later in the year.

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With the increased emphasis placed on IR reconnaissance, the 2nd AD requested two additional RB-57's in August. The IR recon activity in August increased by 20 per cent with acceptable film results covering an area of 3151 square miles.<sup>7</sup>

With the Saigon government enmeshed in internal problems, the pacification program practically came to a halt but significantly, the VC, in late August, showed no signs of taking full advantage of the civil unrest, probably waiting to see how the political situation developed. In early Aug 64, the U.S. Navy strikes against North Vietnam targets following the Tonkin Gulf incident served somewhat to bolster government morale as an indication of U.S. determination to stand by its ally.

However, any improvement in morale was temporary and the 13 Sep 64 attempted coup in Saigon clearly demonstrated the continuing lack of support for the Khanh Government. The Viet Cong, in the week beginning with the coup, unleashed the greatest number of incidents for the year and focused attention on the deterioration of the war effort.

The role of the Vietnamese Air Force and its commander, Brig Gen. Nguyen Cao Ky, in putting down the coup, pointed to the growing strength of the Vietnamese air arm which was building to four squadrons of A-1H's and beginning to feel its strength.<sup>7</sup> The 2nd Air Division's 1st Air Commando Squadron had 30 of the 50 A-1H's for its two squadrons which were expected to be at full strength in December.

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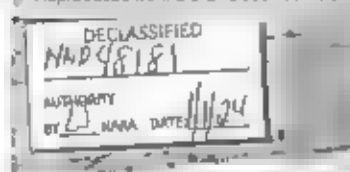
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This build-up in air was coming at the same time the enemy was increasing his numbers, improving his weapons, and planning for "clinging" actions. It would have a role to play both in fighting the Viet Cong and maintaining government stability in the months ahead.

The pattern of government initiated operations against the VC and the VC response had changed little up to September but there were indications of more interest in tactical air. For example, the MACV weekly military reports with their critiques of significant operations, were more frequently calling attention to failure to call for air support. Citing a battle on 19 Aug 64 in the Phu Yen Province when three ARVN battalions attacked a VC force of about 500 Local Forces troops without once calling for air support, MACV commented that "the major fault was the lack of employment of air support".

The civil unrest in the government-held cities of the RVN and the uncertainty of the government after the coup attempt was complicated on 20 Sept 64 by a rebellion of 2800 CIDG Montagnard troops in the Ban Me Thuot area. Fortunately, the VC initiated activity, which had reached a high point for the year a week earlier, declined (although still averaging 700 incidents a week) and it was expected that they were holding off to take advantage of any unexpected political crisis. The Montagnard crisis had no sooner been settled than the VC launched what was to become the first of several "stand and fight" conventional type military actions. This happened near Cau Ke in

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Vinh Binh Province when a reinforced Ranger Battalion ran into a VC position. In an unusual change of tactics, the VC continued to defend their positions throughout the day and the following night, using three to five machine guns and 60mm mortars. Tactical air was called into the battle late in the action and ten sorties were flown. However, in its critique of the action in which only 20 VC were confirmed killed, MACV noted that the lack of decisive results was partly due to "inability to take advantage of air strikes to maneuver." <sup>9.</sup>

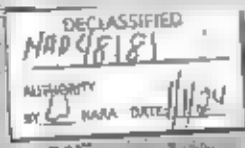
There was another increase in combat operational sorties in September with the VNAF and USAF flying 1144 sorties, an increase of 10 per cent over the previous month. The USAF's 1st Air Commando Squadron had an average of 29 A-1H's in September while VNAF had 68 A-1H's. <sup>10.</sup> As a result of improved and increased enemy anti-air, one A-1H and three A-1E's were downed by enemy automatic weapons in August, a loss rate not previously experienced in such a short period. <sup>11.</sup>

Equipment failures, poor film, and inclement weather impaired IR activity in September when accomplishments dropped 20 per cent below August. The arrival of fresh film and the resolution of the equipment problems got the program under way again late in the month. <sup>12.</sup>

The highly important VNAF Air Request Net was fully operating in both III and IV Corps in September and plans were completed to put it into I and II Corps. The arrival of 20 TDY ALO/FAC's on 25 September gave a boost to the program. These personnel went to all corps areas. Liaison aircraft were also deployed to all corps areas as

\* Sorties as of 23 Sept.

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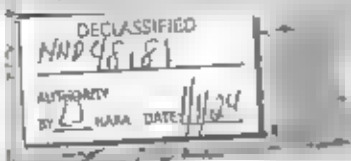
the VNAF redistributed their O-1's and the USAF, which was using its O-1F's for training, deployed them to the maximum extent permissible. The distribution of liaison aircraft in September was 13 in I Corps, 13 in II Corps, 11 in III Corps and nine in IV Corps. There were still not enough liaison aircraft to go around and this was a limiting factor to effective air support. <sup>13.</sup>

While the VC were keeping at about 700 incidents a week in October, the intensity of their attacks was up sharply with resultant heavy government casualties and weapons lost. Pacification operations, particularly in light of continuing government instability, were discouraging and the situation appeared grim. There were strong intelligence rumors that the VC were planning an attack on the coastal city of Quang Ngai and there was concern at all levels that they were in a position to launch such an attack.

A VC document captured in June called for large scale military activity toward the end of the year including the over running of outposts, harassment of ARVN units and lines of communication and opposition to large scale government search and clear operations through ambushes. That this actually was taking place was evident from the fact that the VC incident rates since the month of July had been the highest since November 63, following the anti-Diem coup. <sup>14.</sup>

Following the usual pattern of alternating between periods of high activity and low activity, the number of VC initiated incidents in late October declined but there was still little or no progress

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in pacification efforts. The USAF and VNAF were still building up to their planned strength of 150 aircraft but the amount of air support available in October was the highest for the year, although much of the USAF and VNAF capability was diverted to training. ] Nevertheless, although there was apparently a greater tendency to call for air support, there were outstanding examples of failure to do so. In a major operation on 23 October employing eight government companies plus artillery and armored cavalry against VC units numbering about 400 men some 20 kilometers southwest of Quang Ngai, an excellent opportunity for the employment of tactical air was lost. The VC force had consolidated in prepared positions protected by wire and mine-fields and were surrounded by government force as night fell. At first light on 24 Oct 64, a coordinated attack was made on the enemy positions but government troops failed to penetrate, even with strong artillery support. Not until 1300 hours was air requested for use against this excellent target, and when it was called in, government forces were able to enter the VC held area despite what the USAF FAC considered ineffective napalm bombing by the VNAF. Only 35 VC were killed and nine weapons captured in this operation and MACV's critique noted that "had the planning for the attack on the 24th included requests for tactical air support, the operation would not have been forced to wait for air support at a critical time". 15.

[In October, the VNAF had an average of 65 A-1H's in their inventory while the 2nd AD had 31 A-1E's. These aircraft in October increased

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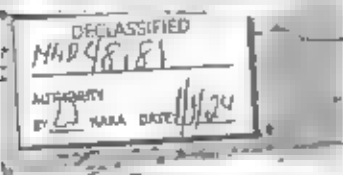
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killed by air. For the first ten months of the year, the average killed per month was around 250. In November, this figure jumped to 1329 and in December, it was 1192. This was not only due to more use of tactical air but to the "clinging engagement" tactics which the VC initiated in October and which they built up in November and December. Also, it was an indicator of the equipping of both the USAF and the VNAF with the excellent A-1 Skyraider in sufficient numbers. Changes in the rules of engagement also was a factor. Since early November, it was no longer necessary to have a VNAF student pilot in the right seat of A-1E's. A "sandbag" observer, usually a basic airman, was permitted.

The VC early morning mortar attack on Bien Hoa air base on 1 Nov 64, knocking out five B-57's and damaging other aircraft, signalled another increase in VC-initiated activity. Just as significant, in early November, four incidents were reported near Pleiku, an area normally free of VC activity. This was an early indicator of a shift in VC activity from the south to the II Corps area where they were to present a formidable force in later months. The attack on Bien Hoa was the first on a primarily American installation and raised the serious question of the security of American bases. It also revealed a strong enemy capability to make bold and daring attacks on places of his own choosing. For much of the latter half of 1964, the enemy had the initiative, making real progress in pacification programs very difficult. The broad pacification program and the Hop Tac program of working outward to secure the critical provinces

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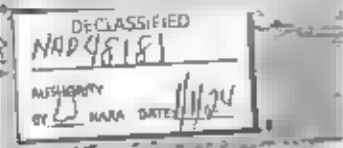
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around Saigon were stalled. A VC penetration on 5 Nov 64 of the village of Can Cong only four kilometers from and in sight of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon pointed out the problem of the Hop Tac program. The enemy was appearing in other areas, too, which he had avoided previously. In the south central provinces of Binh Tuy in II Corps and Khanh Hoa in I Corps there was a significant increase in VC incidents which could pre-  
 sage new enemy encroachments in this hitherto quiet area.

There was, in general, an expansion of enemy activity from III and IV Corps in the southern part of Vietnam to the northern areas of I and II Corps. While greater use of tactical air was being made, there was a continuing tendency toward the end of the year to rely heavily upon armed helicopters for "suppressive fire" against the enemy. For example, a major operation conducted on 2 Nov 64 against some 700 main force VC in An Xuyen Province was carried off without the use of a single tactical air sortie although VNAF A-1H's were standing by on alert for call. The three battalions of government troops used in this operation, which employed Eagle Flight tactics, killed 56 VC and captured one VC and 26 weapons. Ten of the 23 helicopters used in the operation sustained hits in the landing zone which was not pre-struck by tactical air. However, pilots of the helicopters claimed and estimated 100 VC killed by helicopter "suppressive fire". While this was considered by MACV to be a successful demonstration of Eagle Flight techniques, the question existed of how much more successful the operation could have been if tactical air had been employed against the enemy concentrations.

Fortunately, however, this was not typical of November. In an operation in Binh Duong Province in III Corps on 7 Nov 64 involving

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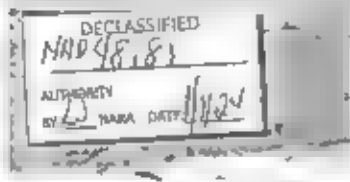
four government battalions in a search and destroy operation against an estimated 400 VC troops, fighter cover was kept over the area throughout the daylight hours and a USAF FAC flying an O-1F was constantly overhead. While only six VC were killed in this operation, air was available. The size of the operation plus the fact that government troops moved to their departure points on the day before and then bivouaced overnight, gave the VC ample warning to withdraw most of their forces, leaving only small harassing units. 21.

In an attack on an 80-man VC company about 11 kilometers west northwest of Da Rang on 19 November, vertical envelopment tactics with no employment of tactical air were used successfully, killing 35 VC with no friendly losses. The day before, on 18 November, the largest heliborne operation in the history of the war was flown by more than 100 helicopters in an action west of Ben Cat in Binh Duong Province, resulting in 163 VC killed, 83 of them by VNAF pilots who were flying in support. 22.

VC activity declined again toward the end of November following losses (768) in the week of 21-28 Nov 64 which were the highest of the year. It was believed that the VC were still keeping a watchful eye on the tense political situation in Saigon. However, it was also felt that the enemy might be repositioning his forces and infiltrating greater numbers from the DRV particularly to the northern provinces.

The greatly improved VNAF and USAF striking power in November as both units neared authorized strengths was being used extensively

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but still not as much as required. In its critique of a major operation conducted on 27 November, MACV called attention to the failure to employ tactical air which was overhead for part of the day. This operation, conducted by three battalions, two armored troops, two RF companies and eight 105's in support, was aimed at two VC companies in flat rice paddy country about 12 kilometers east of My Tho. The weather was clear and sunny. Here again, the VC were forced into a box and at one time, the surrounding government units had to withdraw because they were advancing into the crossfire of friendly units opposite them. During the morning fighting, two A-1H's in good communication with ground elements, were overhead, but they were not called upon to expend ordnance. No air was employed during the afternoon, even though the main engagement of the battle took place then against VC's emplaced in foxholes. MACV, in its critique, said that air power should have been planned for the entire day and that a napalm strike against the VC foxholes would have been most effective.<sup>23</sup>

While there were these examples of inadequate use of available air power, USAF and VNAF Skyraiders were proving to be highly effective in November and the number of enemy killed by air marked a turning point in 1964. In a strike on a concentration of VC in Binh Long Province on 15 November, two A-1H's killed a reported 100 of the enemy. On 29 November, in Hau Nghia Province about 200 miles west of Saigon, ten VNAF A-1H's and four USAF A-1E's dropped nine tons of bombs on an enemy concentration, leaving 105 dead on the battlefield. In terms

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of enemy casualties, the most successful strike of the month was made on 7 November by a combined VNAF-USAF force of 32 A-1 aircraft against a major enemy stronghold about 30 miles northeast of Saigon in the notorious Zone "D". The force, led by Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, dropped over 140 tons of ordnance in a night and first daylight strike, leaving a reported 500 enemy dead. In November, tactical fixed wing air strikes accounted for over 65 per cent of all the enemy killed, a high for the year and more than double the average percentage for previous months.

Despite the fact that weather conditions in November were unfavorable, the VNAF's 71 A-1H's of which 59 were operationally ready and the 2nd AD's 36 A-1E's (30 OR) flew 1412 combat operational sorties, an increase of 16 per cent over the previous month. Of the total, 91 per cent were interdiction or close support, the rest being air cover, escort, armed recon, or airborne alert.<sup>24</sup>

Requests for IR recon doubled in November with over 400 requests received, an all time high in Vietnam. This increase was attributed to two large government operations during the month and the increased use of the VNAF Air Request Net, which enabled AIO/FAC's to go direct to Corps/ASOC with requests. The program for briefing ground commanders throughout Vietnam on the workings of the VNAF Air Request Net was completed in November and this extensive education program was expected to show results.<sup>25</sup>

The VNAF, which started the year with one A-1H squadron, was beginning to show evidence of its improved capability. In November,

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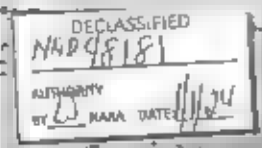
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there were 116 A-1H pilots assigned to the four VNAF squadrons while another 65 were in various stages of training. There were six well qualified USAF advisors with each VNAF squadron, giving advice and assistance at all locations. In November the JCS approved the 5th and 6th VNAF A-1H squadrons, one to activate on 1 May 1965 and the other by 1 June 1965.<sup>26.</sup>

In December, when the Viet Cong fought several prolonged setpiece battles, the efficacy of air power was clearly demonstrated in the Vietnam environment. The enemy, having cut back his activity for several weeks, had ample time in which to rest, resupply, and retrain and early in the month, a renewed offensive was expected. Also, the apparent ability of the new Government of Tranh Van Huong to maintain control in Saigon probably disappointed enemy hopes for an immediately exploitable political crisis.<sup>27.</sup>

In the second week of December, the Viet Cong, as expected, increased their activity in all Corps areas except the III Corps around Saigon and there was a significant rise in the number of large scale attacks. However, there appeared to be developing in the III Corps area provinces of Long An and Phuoc Tuy a major deterioration of security where VC units were believed to be relocating. One regiment was detected shifting its headquarters southeastward into Phuoc Tuy Province and a battalion size unit was moving into Bien Hoa Province. Reports also showed two enemy battalions moving into Long An Province one each side of Highway 4. The first VC onslaught, however, was to

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come in Binh Dinh Province, where, on 7 December, the enemy overran the An Lao District Headquarters and stayed to fight for several days. Two days later, a VC battalion overran a battalion CP and a 105mm howitzer platoon in Quang Tin Province about 10 miles north of An Lao. In both these actions, tactical air played a highly significant role in salvaging government resources.<sup>28.</sup>

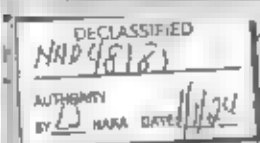
A more decisive air victory was achieved on 11 December some 450 miles south of An Lao where VC initiated ambushes were turned into qualified successes by effective air support of ambushed forces in the vicinity of Long My in Chuong Thien Province. Some 500 Viet Cong were estimated to have been killed by air in this action.<sup>29.</sup>

The greatest battle of the war came in the closing days of the year at Binh Gia in Phuoc Tuy Province, only 50 kilometers east of Saigon. At Binh Gia the VC stood their ground in a six day battle that caused heavy government casualties. Also at Binh Gia the failure to make full and proper use of the tactical air capability forcefully demonstrated the case for tactical air in Vietnam.

As the year drew to a close, the Viet Cong were riding high on the wave of success. The daring and successful bombing of the Brink Hotel in Saigon on 24 December and the success at Binh Gia carried out against the faltering pacification program and the continuing weak Saigon government shattered any illusions that may have remained about an easy victory over the enemy.

However, the air threat which the enemy faced was clearly demonstrated in December when an average of 40 USAF A-1E's (33 OR) and 75

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VNAF A-1H's (47 OR) flew 2075 combat operational sorties, a 47 per cent increase over November and a high for the year. IR and photo requests from the improved USAF recce force also reached a high for the year in December when 549 requests were received, 228 of these being IR. The third RB-57 was added to the recce force in December. Although the RVNAF High Command had still not published an implementing directive for the VNAF Air Request Net, improved communications and the arrival of TDI and PCS personnel to man it greatly helped its effectiveness.

In a message to all advisory personnel in Vietnam, General Westmoreland at the end of 1964, cited some of the brighter elements in the overall USAP/RVNAP situation. The GVN was calling up manpower in the 20-25 age group with the response exceeding expectations. Ineffective combat units were returning to effective status more rapidly than anticipated. The commanders and staff officers heading up RVNAP units were considered to be the most competent yet observed. Morale-producing projects, in the administration, personnel, and promotion areas were on the upswing. The assignment of advisors to sub-sectors was just beginning to be felt with pleasantly surprising results. There were substantial improvements in all aspects of intelligence and in the use of intelligence in planning operations. Increased effectiveness of new artillery and aviation units was evident as the 105's began replacing the 4.2's in divisions, additional helicopters started arriving and the VNAF neared completion of its build-up to four squadrons

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M-24 tanks in December were being replaced by M-41's and by May, all five tank troops would have been converted. The special forces program was being reorientated, Hop Tac operations were expected to gain momentum, more effective procedures for the arrest and disposal of VC prisoners were being promulgated, and a modest resources control program was initiated. Also, third country assistance programs were operating as a positive factor, with fourteen countries contributing support, and additional and substantial third-country contributions expected.<sup>31.</sup>

The RVNAF, General Westmoreland said, possessed the greatest, most flexible, and responsive power in its history, and used properly, this capacity for militarily defeating the VC was assured.<sup>32.</sup>

The impressive performance of air in November and December in which the number of Viet Cong KBA equalled those KBA the rest of the year and accounted for more than 65 per cent of all kills, was a vivid reminder of what air could do in support of ground operations if properly used. Undoubtedly, this led to greater appreciation for fixed wing tactical air. New weapons such as the Lazy Dog were ready for introduction at the end of the year. A force of jet aircraft-F-100's sent to Da Nang after the shooting down of a Yankee Team plane in Laos in June and B-57's sent to Bien Hoa after the August Tonkin Gulf incident, provided a modern jet force for use in strikes against the Viet Cong as soon as political considerations warranted such use. An arrangement had been worked out with Army air through

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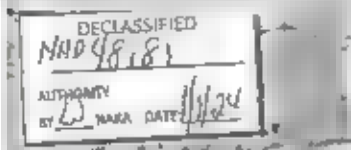
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a joint 2nd AD-USASCV directive in August which set up procedures for the employment of fighters and helicopters in support of ground forces. A new squadron of C-123's was available to help absorb the transport role and new side-firing FC-47's had proved eminently successful in support of outposts under attack at night. The rules of engagement were relaxed somewhat in November and after some vacillation, a decision was made to retain the 19th TASS with all-important O-1F observer planes. Work on the improvement of airfields continued throughout the period and work was nearing completion on New Can Tho, which would support a VNAF squadron of fighters in the key delta area. The Air Operations Center, bolstered by the assignment of additional Forward Air Controllers and Air Liaison Officers to field units, continued throughout the period to function efficiently as a central control agency for most of the fixed wing combat air in Vietnam.

In general, the 2nd AD, which was almost crippled in the Spring of 1964 after the grounding of the T-28's and B-26's and which was fighting an uphill battle to sell its capabilities, was in a strong position at the end of the year and there appeared to be a much greater appreciation of its capabilities. The stage was being set for the first really effective employment of the powerful air weapon against the elusive highly motivated and hardy Viet Cong adversary.

Yet, toward the end of 1964, there occurred one of those periodic upheavals which characterized the Saigon political scene throughout the year and which underlined one of the basic and most

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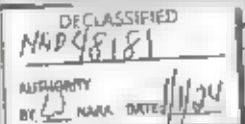
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serious problems faced by all military commanders in Vietnam. This was the action of the Armed Forces Council on 20 December dissolving the High National Council and ordering the arrest of splinter political leaders. Whatever the motives, it appeared that the military bloc, headed by Lt. Gen Nguyen Khanh, was impatient with the civilian government which the U.S. Mission had taken great pains to develop. It was a blow to a fragile constitutional government which could give the Vietnamese people something to build upon and something they could feel part of. Less than two weeks before this action, Ambassador Taylor, recently returned from the U.S., had told Vietnamese officers at an 8 December dinner given by General Westmoreland, that the political situation in SVN had to be stabilized and further coups avoided if further U.S. assistance for fighting the war was to be extended.<sup>33</sup>

At a meeting with several of the Armed Forces Council generals held on the afternoon of 20 December, Ambassador Taylor emphasized his deep and sincere concern over the Council's action. He noted that it would be interpreted by the world as another military coup and an assertion of military supremacy in spite of the fact that a facade of civilian government had been maintained.<sup>34</sup>

General Khanh openly attacked Ambassador Taylor in the press for his manner of handling the generals and there appeared to be a widening rift between the U.S. Mission and the Armed Forces Council, which held the effective power in Vietnam.

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For the rest of the year, major efforts were made to patch up the differences and try to establish some semblance of political order in Saigon, but expectations were not optimistic.

#### USAF Posture in Southeast Asia

The 221 USAF aircraft in the Republic of Vietnam in December were located at the three main USAF bases, Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa, and Da Nang. All the 48 A-1E's were located at Bien Hoa as part of the 1st and 602nd Air Commando Squadrons under the 34th Tactical Group. Of the 72 C-123's possessed by the 315th Troop Carrier Group, 52 were at Tan Son Nhut assigned to the 309th, 310th Troop Carrier Squadrons; and the 19th Air Commando Squadron; 17 were at Da Nang with 311th TCS, four were assigned to "Ranch Hand" defoliation missions out of Tan Son Nhut and four were assigned to "Duck Hook" for operations out of Don Muang, Thailand. The 2nd AD also had 22 O-1F's assigned to the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron at Bien Hoa for forward air control duties. Ten of the 16 F-102's were based at Da Nang, and four at Tan Son Nhut for air defense duties. Also at Da Nang were 15 F-100's for support of flights over Laos and contingency operations. Twelve RF-101's and three RB-57's were based at Tan Son Nhut under control of the 33rd Tactical Group and assigned to aerial reconnaissance tasks. Ten B-57's remained at Bien Hoa on temporary duty from Clark Air Force base in the Philippines for possible use in Vietnam and in out-of-country operations. In addition to these aircraft, the 2nd AD had

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two administrative U-3B's at Tan Son Nhut, three U-10B pay war aircraft at Bien Hoa, seven C-47's for air commando work at Bien Hoa, and four C-54's, one VC-47 and one VC-123 at Tan Son Nhut on routine carrier duties. Six HH-43B/P rescue helicopters which arrived in the theater in August were based at Bien Hoa and Da Nang, three at each base. Da Nang also had three HH-16's.<sup>35</sup>

In Thailand, there were 15 F-100's at Takhli and 18 F-105's at Korat, all committed to support of "Yankee Team" and contingency operations. Four F-102's were at Don Muang for air defense. At Udorn, where Det. 6, 1st Air Commando Wing moved in May 1964, there were five T-28D's, 17 T-28B's, and ten HT-28D's to back up the Laotian Air Force effort. Also, two HH-43B rescue helicopters were located at Korat and two at Takhli. Two HH-16 helicopters were also at Korat.<sup>36</sup> Also in Thailand and under 2nd AD control were eight Royal Australian Air Force sabres at Ubon and two Bristol freighters of the Royal New Zealand Air Force at Korat, making a total of 85 U.S. controlled aircraft in the country.

The 2nd AD organization for employing these aircraft had expanded somewhat during the period. General Moore still had under his command the 35th Tactical Group at Don Muang, Thailand, the 34th Tactical Group at Bien Hoa and the 23rd Air Base Group at Da Nang. An additional group, the 37th Air Base Group, was planned for activation early in 1965 at Nha Trang which was also scheduled to receive the 310th Troop Carrier Squadron when facilities were ready. To support

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the expanded operation in Thailand a new Air Support Operations Center was established in August at Udorn. The 315th Air Division added another squadron in this period to take up the increasing workload assigned to the C-123 transports.

Manning this complex of USAF installations in RVN and Thailand at the end of 1964 were 9091 people - 6346 in Vietnam and 2745 in Thailand. These figures include 210 local nationals in Thailand and 128 local nationals and 12 U.S. civilians in RVN. Of the total 9753 U.S. military personnel assigned, 2952 were TDY personnel.<sup>37.</sup>

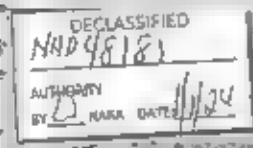
The total USAF military strength assigned at the end of 1964 was up 70 per cent from what it was at the beginning of the year, when 859 military personnel were assigned in Thailand and 4102 in RVN.<sup>38.</sup>

The increase was primarily due to the buildup after the August Tonkin Gulf incident and reflected the decided change in the status of the conflict from what it was at the end of 1963 when action was taken to reduce the USAF and other US military strength in Vietnam by 1000 spaces.

Operating in a combat environment unlike anything the Air Force ever experienced before and with conditions and requirements constantly changing, the 2d Air Division had to adapt its basic organization to meet current needs.

\* The "paper war" also presented a problem of footnoteworthy mention. Compared to the issuance of two or three page frag orders for World War II missions involving hundreds of planes against multiple targets, the ops order for a single "Yankee Team recon mission over Laos usually totalled 15 or more pages. Reporting from Vietnam placed a heavy burden on the comm system. One message report for example, was 21 pages long and went to 50 addressees, requiring 242 re-runs because of garbles, missed lines, etc. Col. Allison C. Brooks, 2d AD Deputy Commander, in his 14 page, single-spaced "end of tour" report, sadly contrasted this message with the famed report of World War II commander, "sighted sub, sank same".

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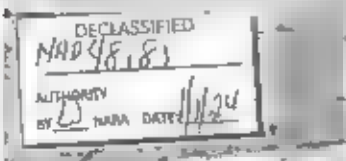
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Its situation was described by Colonel Allison C. Brooks, Deputy  
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Commander, 2nd AD, who said:

...This war is different from any war in which airmen have fought before. No military action takes place without an interrelationship between political, economic, psychological, and often, personality factors. The enemy is everywhere and nowhere. There is no bomb line, and at present, no counter-air or interdiction, as we knew it in WW II and Korea. Air operations in RVN require a high degree of flexibility and place a high premium on professionalism, ingenuity, motivation, and guts. Very often things "grew like Topey" and we had to learn the hard way--all over again...

The increased strength of the enemy and his demonstrated improvement in tactics, including anti-aircraft tactics, presented a continuing challenge to the Air Force in Vietnam. The estimated strength of confirmed main and local forces increased by about 40 per cent during 1964, from 22,900 to 32,500, although part of this increase was the result of confirmation of VC units in country which may have been around for two or more years. Guerrilla strength remained at between 60 to 80 thousand. By the end of 1964, there was a noticeable increase in VC ability to attack and ambush ARVN units of battalion strength and larger. The VC also demonstrated an increased willingness to stay in a contested area until pressured out by superior strength. This increased strength and capability was accompanied by

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what appeared to be a higher degree of motivation. The infiltration of weapons, ammunition and some critical medical and signal supplies appeared to increase during 1964. More modern types of Chinese Communist copies of Soviet weapons were captured during 1964, indicating external support by sea and inland waterway infiltration and a more reliable supply system capable of supporting the introduction of new weapons and ammunition.<sup>40</sup>

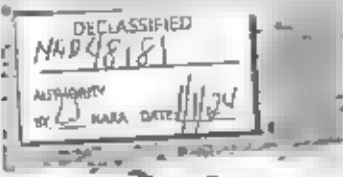
#### Overall US/Vietnamese Posture in RVN

The total number of U. S. aircraft in Vietnam rose during 1964 from 511 to 730, with increases shown by all air arms. The US Army's air strength increased from 370 to 479, the USAF from 112 to 220, and the U.S. Marines from 29 to 31. VNAP strength rose from 228 to 282 aircraft. In addition, six CV-2B Caribous of the Royal Australian Air Force entered the country in August 1964 to join the air effort.<sup>41</sup>

There was a definite improvement in the US/Vietnamese, and third country strength in Vietnam. In 1964, U. S. military strength in Vietnam rose by 7,312 to a total of 23,301, with the US Army going from 10,119 to 14,688, the USAF going from 4,630 to 6,604, the US Navy increasing from 757 to 1,109 and the US Marines from 483 to 900. The number of Department of Defense civilians dropped from 336 to 196 while dependents increased slightly from 724 to 752.<sup>42</sup>

By the end of 1964, the strength of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces increased by 120,475 over 1963 for a total of 535,851. This

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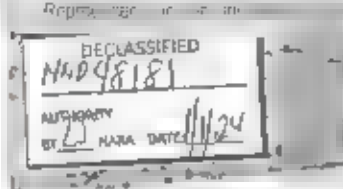
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increased the ratio of RVNAF to VC from 4.5:1 to 5.2:1. However, there was a decrease in the mobile opposing forces, that is, the RVNAF less Popular Forces compared to the Viet Cong less guerrillas. This dropped from 14:1 in 1963 to 12:1 in 1964. In addition to the 44 aircraft added to the VNAF, the ground forces in 1964 acquired an additional 122 105mm artillery tubes bringing the total to 352 and thirty 155mm tubes making a total of 96.<sup>43.</sup>

This substantial improvement in the government military posture did not, however prevent a considerable decrease in operational effectiveness and achieved results in 1964. VC incidents increased by 10,392 over 1963 to a total of 28,201 while enemy battalion sized attacks increased by 21 to 36. RVNAF desertions increased by 36,978 over 1963 with 73,379 desertions recorded in 1964. There was an unfavorable ratio of weapons lost, and KIA's. The number of RVNAF killed increased from 5,947 in 1963 to 7,885 in 1964 while VC killed dropped from 20,575 in 1963 to 16,969 in 1964. The number of weapons lost by government forces climbed from 8,480 in 1963 to 13,705 in 1964. There were only 4,875 weapons captured from the VC in 1964 compared to 5,397 in 1963.<sup>44.</sup>

In general, 1964 was a bad year for the ground war in Vietnam, despite the increase in RVNAF personnel strength and equipment and in spite of a 400 per cent increase in the number of air mobile operations carried out. These air mobile operations, involving the air-lifting by helicopters of ARVN forces into known VC areas increased

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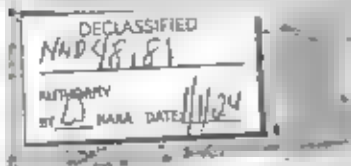
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from 98 in 1963 to 498 in 1964. Large unit operations by ARVN forces almost doubled in 1964 going from 1,276 to 2,448.<sup>45-</sup>

While the number of enemy killed by air also showed a drop in 1964 over 1963, there was a spectacular improvement in air results in November and December at the same time that the Vietnamese ground forces were being subjected to severe setbacks by the enemy. In 1963, air strikes resulted in 7,361 enemy killed while in 1964, the number killed by air dropped to 5,142.<sup>46-</sup> However, this was partly due to the grounding of the B-26's and T-28's in the spring which severely curtailed US Air Force striking power for a period of several months. Also the need to employ resources for the training of two additional squadrons of VNAF A-1H pilots served to detract from the overall air effort. However, when both the VNAF and USAF approached their authorized A-1 strength, the air picture changed radically.

In total air activity and in combat strikes, both the USAF and the VNAF reached all-time highs in December. The USAF in December flew a total of 8,670 sorties for all its aircraft, logging 11,913 hours, while all VNAF aircraft made 11,388 sorties in 12,964 hours. Strike aircraft of both forces (A-1E and A-1H) flew 3,056 sorties in December compared with 1,820 in July. More significant, perhaps, in terms of effectiveness, was the increase in the amount of ordnance delivered. The USAF and VNAF Skyraiders delivered 3,247,220 pounds of bombs, 1,217 napalm bombs, 289,155 rounds of 20mm ammo, and 98 rockets, during December when an average of 118 Skyraiders were possessed daily during

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the month. In June, when the combined forces possessed an average of 106.8 aircraft daily (including T-28s as well as A-1's), ordnance delivered amounted to 2,544,522 pounds of bombs, 248 napalm bombs, 4,362 rockets, 96,816 rounds of 20mm ammo and 40,540 rounds of .50 caliber ammo. The ordnance dropped in both June and December was up sharply from January, when both forces possessed an average of 69.4 fighters daily consisting of A-1H's, B-26's, and T-28's. The chart 47. below shows this improvement:

Ordnance Delivered by Strike Aircraft - 1964

	<u>January</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>December</u>
Strike acft Poss.	69.4	106.8	116
Bombs (lbs)	1,313,590	2,544,520	3,247,220
Rockets #	2,113	4,362	98
Napalm #	1,013	248	1,217
20mm rounds	58,132	96,816	289,155
.50 cal. rounds	244,522	40,540	
7.62 cal. rounds*			140,949*

In terms of results of aircraft strikes, the figures of December showed great improvement over the averages for the rest of the months of the year. In December, there were 1,192 Viet Cong killed, less than the 1,329 killed in November, but nearly five times higher than the monthly average for previous months of 1964. In December, 1,751

\* The 7.62 ammo was expended by the FC-47 equipped with mini-guns which started operations in December.

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structures were destroyed and 651 damaged, compared to 339 destroyed and 98 damaged in July. Forty-nine sampans were destroyed or damaged in December compared to 12 in July. In destruction of structures and sampans as well as in VC killed by air, results for November and December were geometrically increased over the average for previous months.<sup>48.</sup>

As evidenced by these statistics for November and December and the continuing high level of air activity in subsequent months, there was a definite increase in intensity of the air war in Vietnam as well as outside the country. The 2nd Air Division had turned a corner in its air role in Vietnam. In late 1964, in readiness for its expanded role the 2nd AD was prepared for increased recon and strike sorties over Laos, employment of new weapons such as Lazy Dog (Mark 44) and CBU, use of jets in Vietnam, and strikes against North Vietnam.

The rising intensity of the air war in the last months of 1964 also showed in 2nd AD casualty figures. There were almost as many killed and wounded in the last three months of the year as there were in the previous nine months. Throughout 1964, there were 24 USAF personnel killed in action and 94 wounded in action. Between 1 October and 31 December, 14 were killed and 62 wounded. This placed the total number of USAF dead in Vietnam since the Air Force entry into the conflict in November 1961 at 56.<sup>49.</sup>

The number of aircraft lost in Vietnam combat also rose in the latter half of the year. Between 1 July and 31 December, 17 USAF

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planes were combat losses\* compared to eight in the previous six months. The VNAF during the last half of the year had nine A-1H's lost to combat and six to accidents.

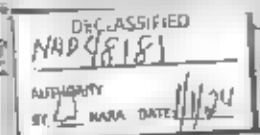
Nonetheless, while these losses were evidence of an improving enemy AA capability, they were still tolerable in terms of the much greater effectiveness of assigned air strength in Vietnam.

One remarkable organizational feature which stood out at the end of the year was the ability of the Tactical Air Control System to adapt itself to the expanding air role in Vietnam. The Air Operations Center at Tan Son Nhut which was rushed to completion in a period of 14 days in January 1962, had proved highly effective in exercising control of the air war in Vietnam. The AOC worked through the four Air Support Operations Centers located at Corps headquarters in Da Nang, Pleiku, Tan Son Nhut, and Can Tho. A separate Air Support Operations Center was established at Udorn on 10 August. In Vietnam, there were four Control and Reporting Posts (CRP's), one at each ASOC and a Control and Reporting Center (CRC) at Tan Son Nhut. In Thailand, there were five CRP's located at Udorn, Nakhon Phanom, Ubon, Korat, and Phitsanulok with a CRC at Don Muang.

Both in the Vietnam fighting and in the out-of-country air operations, the second half of 1964 saw major changes in the structural and operational effectiveness of the Tactical Air Control System. There were, in effect, three control systems operating for air operations in Southeast Asia, the operations in Vietnam controlled by the Air

\* Includes five B-57's destroyed during 1 November VC mortar attack on Bien Hoa

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Operations Center, out-of-country jet operations controlled by the 2nd AD Command Post, and operations of conventional units out of Thailand, controlled by the Air Operations Center at Don Muang.

#### IMPROVEMENTS IN RVN COMBAT AIR POSTURE

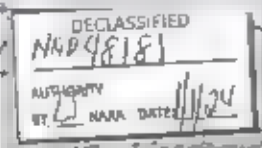
There were several significant developments in the USAF and VNAF air structure which contributed to the marked improvement in air results in the last months of 1964. The introduction of A-1E's for the USAF air commando units at Bien Hoa, the doubling of authorized VNAF A-1H strength, changes in tactics, relaxation of the ground rules, improved coordination with the Army, an increase in AIO's and FAC's, new installations, new weapons, and a streamlined air request net, all played a part.

Continuing to detract from the overall effort was the inability of the VNAF to maintain an in-commission rate for its A-1H's approaching that for the A-1E's mainly due to training requirements. Also, after three years, there were still instances of improper use of close air support by ground units and of failure to call for air support until it was too late.

#### Introduction of A-1E's

The replacement of the B-26's and T-28's which served in Vietnam from November 1961 till April 1964 with the A-1E's gave a decided boost

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to the USAF close air support role.\* The first four A-1E's arrived on 31 May and by the end of 1964, the 34th Tactical Group at Bien Hoa possessed 48 with an additional nine expected in January. These would bring the 34th to full strength<sup>51.</sup> for its two Air Commando Squadrons, the 1st ACS and the 602nd ACS. This USAF force, combined with the VNAF A-1E force, gave the Tactical Air Control System on 4 January 1965<sup>52.</sup> operationally ready Skyraiders for daily combat operations compared to 64 at the end of July. The number of combat sorties flown by A-1 aircraft rose from 1,163 in July 1964 to 1,874 in December, an all time high."

The A-1E proved to be highly suitable for the counterinsurgency role in Vietnam according to the 34th Tactical Group commander, Colonel William E. Bethea. Colonel Bethea called it a "very excellent platform both for rapid fire weapons such as the 20mm cannon, mini-gun, 40mm gun and an outstanding dive bombing platform. The aircraft could carry loads in excess of 6,000 pounds plus a belly tank, giving it more shock fire power than the B-17 of World War II, although the plane carried only 14 bombs on a normal mission, it could take as many as 24 using the MEE ejection racks. It could operate out of fields of 4000-4500 feet with full bomb loads and could use asphalt runways that any transport aircraft could land on. The A-1E had the capability of carrying its own flares and bombing under the light of these

\* See Hist 2nd AD, Jan-Jun 1964, Chap I, pp 45 for discussion of phase-out of the B-26's and F-28's

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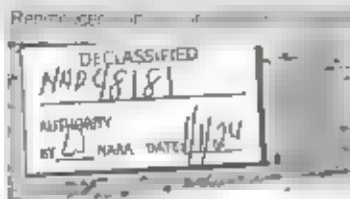
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flares although this feature was not employed in Vietnam where C-123's and C-47's were adequately providing flare support. These versatile aircraft, with a slight modification, could carry eight to ten paratroopers and a load of ordnance which could be used to give close support to these paratroopers after they landed. It also was suited to carry navigators for precise mine laying work. These latter two uses were not employed in Vietnam. 53.

The diversity of ordnance which could be carried in the 15 ordnance stations of the A-1E proved valuable when it was necessary to switch an aircraft from one target to another. Since the terrain and the nature of the target could quickly change, the aircraft in the air had to be able to cope with this change. For example, an aircraft flying a mission over the flat delta against structures and diverted to attack a troop concentration in dense jungle area could choose its ordnance to the terrain and target needs. 54.

The aircraft had certain disadvantages, however. While it could loiter over the target for three to four hours, it was highly vulnerable to any air to air combat, even T-28's. It had a normal cruise speed of only 155 knots although it could reach speeds of over 300 knots for napalm runs and dive bombing runs. Most napalm runs, however, were made at about 250 knots while dive bombing runs were at 280 knots. The aircraft tires presented the 34th with quite a problem when operating with heavy bomb loads even on smooth concrete runways. An average of six to ten A-1E tires had to be changed daily at Bien

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Hoa. There was also quite a seige of engine failures in the air, not complete failures, but parts breaking loose and oil lines failing. Colonel Bethea said the A-1E engine couldn't compare with the Pratt and Whitney R-2800's on the old P-47's and had to be handled much more delicately. The 20mm cannon on the A-1E was obsolete and presented excessive maintenance problems. 55.

On balance, however, the A-1E was judged by the men who flew it to be a decided improvement over its predecessors, the B-26 and T-28. While seven A-1E's were lost in 1964, five were for combat reasons and only two for other reasons. With the 34th operating its two squadrons of 25 aircraft each in 1965, the Air Force counterinsurgency role promised to be a much more significant one than it was in the bleak months of early 1964 when the T-28 and B-26 wing failure problems almost eliminated USAF craft from combat for a short period.

#### Increase in VNAF A-1H Strength

The Vietnamese Air Force was authorized four squadrons of A-1H's in December 1964, twice the amount it had at the beginning of the year. All four of these squadrons were formed but only three were operational at the end of the year. The third squadron of A-1H's was rushed into the theater ahead of schedule and was in place at Bien Hoa in May. The fourth squadron was organized in October. On 31 December, there were 96 A-1H's in the VNAF inventory, 79 of these assigned to tactical units. Two additional A-1H squadrons were planned for the VNAF, giving it a total of 6 squadrons.

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The three operational squadrons, each authorized 25 A-1H aircraft, were the 514th and 518th Fighter Squadrons at Bien Hoa and the 516th at Da Nang. The 520th scheduled for Can Tho, also had 25 authorized.

The status of these units was as follows:

Unit	Mission Aircraft		Air Crews	Location
	UE	Assigned		
514th Ftr Sq	25	24	32	Bien Hoa
516th Ftr Sq	25	21	32	Da Nang
518th Ftr Sq	25	23	32	Bien Hoa
520th Ftr Sq	25	11	28	Can Tho

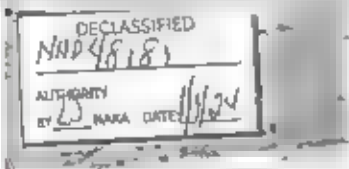
Each squadron was also assigned two T-28 or RT-28 aircraft.

In addition to these strike squadrons, the VNAF had three liaison squadrons, the 110th, 112th and 114th Liaison Squadrons with authorization of 17 O-1F's each. They also had four helicopter squadrons, the 211th, 213th, 217th, and 215th Helicopter Squadrons authorized 20 CH-34's per squadron, the 33rd Transport Wing with 36 C-47 type aircraft authorized, and the 12th School Squadron with 10 U-17 authorized. The authorized strength had increased slightly from the 295 authorized in July.

The major task in connection with the expanded A-1H program was the training of Vietnamese Air Force pilots. For the 2 to 1 pilot-cockpit ratio, 200 pilots would be required for the 100 A-1H's assigned to the four VNAF squadrons. Training of the new A-1H pilots began on 4 May with personnel of the U.S. Navy Squadron VA-152 acting as instructors.\* Students pilot, who had an average of 220 hours in T-28

\* See Hist 2AD, Jan-Jun 64, Chap I, pp 56-59.

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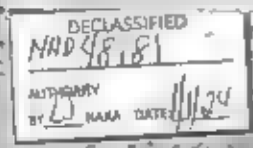
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time with 20 hours solo at Randolph Field, were given a minimum of ten sorties in the right seat of the A-1E at Bien Hoa. The idea was to indoctrinate the relatively small Vietnamese pilots in the characteristics of a big airplane. In the first phase of training with USAF instructors, students were allowed to start the two seater A-1E airplane, taxi it, and fly it to and from the target, but the instructor took the airplane off, delivered the ordnance, and landed the plane. 58.

After this initial instruction, the students were turned over to the Navy detachment which had borrowed four A-1E's from the 34th. The Navy tried for a period of seven weeks to give students about four dual rides in the A-1E's prior to soloing them in a single seat A-1H. This program proved to be unwieldy and the accident rate was so high with students running off the runway that a new system was tried. The 34th took back its A-1E's and the job of putting students through their first solo flights.

Under the changed program, students flew 25 hours in the left seat for all except the last ride. It was found that in 25 hours, the student could solo properly with a reduction in the accident rate. After this phase, students were turned over to the Navy training unit where they flew some 40 hours in A-1H's learning basic formation, bombing of MK 76 smoke bombs at the Vung Tau range, formation flying and some basic navigation. After this, they returned to the 34th for an up-grade training program, moving into a combat tactic training phase where the student would fly actual combat missions with a USAF

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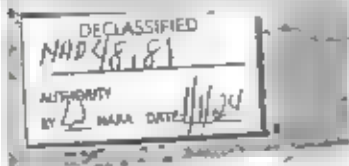
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instructor. Unfortunately in this training phase which was conducted in the Fall of 1964, eight A-1's crashed, four of which were believed shot down. After these losses of American and Vietnamese pilots, the VNAF asked for and DOD approval was obtained for a return to the combat observer program which was formally initiated on 5 November when 20 combat observers were assigned. Another 30 combat observers were planned for the immediate future.  
59.

With departure of the Navy training detachment on 29 November, 34th Tactical Group took over the entire 85 hours training program. In the first phase, the pilot learned to solo the aircraft and pick up navigation, formation, and instrument training. In the second phase, he flew 16 sorties on practice ordnance delivery missions. The third phase involved three combat sorties where ordnance was dropped. A-1E's were used for all phases of this training.  
60.

The increase in VNAF A-1H strength and the pilot training program sharply boosted the performance of this aircraft. The number of A-1H sorties flown rose from 145 in June to 324 in December. Flying hours with A-1H's also doubled, from 1616 in June to 3278 in December. By the end of December, there were 160 trained A-1 pilots in the Vietnamese Air Force. An additional 37 students were in various stages of A-1 training, 23 in RVN and 14 in the U.S. Also undergoing training in the U.S. were 106 students in F-28's, 32 in the E-34 and three in G-47's. In Vietnam, eight E-34 pilots and 18 U-17 pilots were undergoing training at the end of the year. This would help bring about

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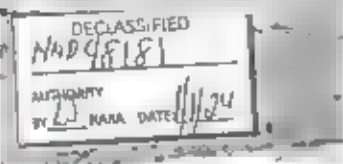
the desired 2:1 cockpit ration for the A-1 aircraft in the VNAF inventory.

In addition to the four A-1H fighter squadrons authorized in December 1964, the VNAF had approval for two more fighter squadrons to be activated in FY 4/65 and FY 1/66 respectively. The training program was planned to bring the pilot manning ratio up to 2.0 pilots per cockpit as rapidly as possible. In 1964, the VNAF under the command of Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, had done much to improve its effectiveness. In December, more than 90 per cent of A-1H flight time was devoted to close air support, interdiction, air cover, armed recon, and escort of trains, helicopters, and convoys. An around the clock fighter alert was established and large scale night strikes were introduced.<sup>62.</sup>

The authorized strength of the VNAF was greatly increased since July of 1963, standing at 11,582 military and 981 civilians at the end of 1964. Being a select unit in the Vietnamese military structure, the command did not anticipate any difficulty in obtaining qualified recruits. Many youths eligible for the draft preferred to volunteer for Air Force duty. A shortage of pilots and maintenance personnel was expected to continue for the near future, however.<sup>63.</sup>

In a relatively short time, the Vietnamese Air Force, under the guidance of the 2nd Air Division and the Air Force Advisory Group, had made remarkable strides in performance and much of the demonstrated effectiveness of air in November and December was attributable to this advance.

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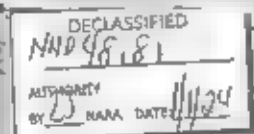
### New A-1E Tactics

Although the Vietnamese Air Force had received the A-1E in October 1959, the 34th Tactical Group had little experience with this aircraft before the arrival of the first ones in May 1964. Therefore, much experimenting went into the aircraft to determine its best application to the Vietnam air fighting. As the result of thousands of hours in combat sorties, the group developed the most applicable bomb loads and tactics.<sup>64.</sup>

The major change was the employment of no less than four aircraft on any daytime mission or two on night alert flights. Four ship flights allowed for suppression of the ever increasing ground fire from the Viet Cong. On most flights, two planes were equipped with bombs and two with napalm. The two bombing planes would strike first to disrupt the enemy and then come in on the same target from a 45 to 90 degree angle to the napalm carrying plane, strafing the area before the napalm was dropped at low altitude. This kept down the fire from the more vulnerable napalm carrier. Results of this tactic were very successful toward the end of the year.<sup>65.</sup>

From the standpoint of defense, the use of no less than four aircraft allowed for bomb and gunfire cover to low level attacking aircraft that might be delivering napalm. This was probably the most important single defense maneuver used in Vietnam. While such a maneuver was necessary for all types of aircraft, it was especially important with the slow-flying A-1E.<sup>66.</sup>

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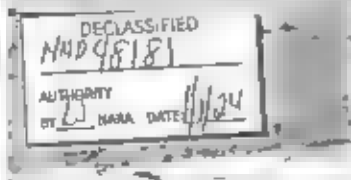
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Another reason for using large numbers of aircraft on single missions was the need to deliver maximum firepower on a fleeting target in the shortest possible time. The A-1E, with its fifteen ordnance stations, made it ideal for the delivery of mass munitions on a target. This gave a "shotgun" rather than a rifle effect. To maximize this shotgun effect, large numbers of aircraft making multiple releases on each aircraft pass were used. Four ships on an attack on a target in daylight usually completed the attack and expended all the ordnance in ten minutes, making maximum use of defensive air cover from planes which had already made their strikes.<sup>67.</sup>

The slow-flying A-1E, more than other aircraft, made air cover very important. Perhaps the most important single defensive maneuver employed by USAF Skyraiders in Vietnam was the covering of low level attacking aircraft with bombs and guns.<sup>68.</sup>

Tactics employed on strikes were relatively simple, based primarily on the need to avoid enemy ground fire. The Viet Cong's .30 caliber weapons were considered to have an effective aimed lethal range of 1500 feet while .50 caliber automatic weapons could be lethal at 3500 feet. For bombing and rocketry strikes, a dive heading with 30 degrees or more angle off between successive delivery headings was used. The flight leader initiated the first pass down-wing to minimize the inherent six o'clock error. Release and recovery were initiated so as to insure recovery by 1500 feet with a rapid zoom without turning up to 3500 feet, the .50 caliber range. The aircraft making this maneuver

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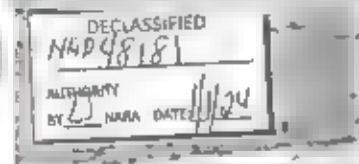
provided the thinnest silhouette to enemy gunners. Bombs could be released simultaneously to completely destroy a pinpoint area or released at a programmed rate to "sow" bombs over a given area. <sup>69.</sup>

Low level passes, usually napalm drops, were initiated from altitude to convert the altitude to air speed. The pass was flown so as to arrive on the deck at least 3500 feet from the target. When four aircraft were used, two would provide cover for the two attacking planes. Successive passes were made from as great an angle off preceding passes as possible. When mixed ordnance was used, the dive bomb aircraft expended first and then furnished cover for the low level delivery aircraft. Cover fire was timed so as to hit just split seconds before the arrival of the low level delivery aircraft, thus providing enemy gunners with multiple targets. The cover aircraft planned his pass to fire from about 45 to 90 degrees off the delivery heading. <sup>70.</sup>

High and low angle strafing were used in Vietnam. High angle strafing used against area targets in the jungle recovered at above 1500 feet with a zoom to over 3500 feet to provide less risk and a means of penetrating dug-in positions. When attacks were made below 1500 feet, aircraft descended as rapidly as possible to tree top level and made a low level withdrawal to beyond 3500 feet from the target and then an upward zoom to 3500 feet altitude. This low level strafing was used against sampans and for cover fire. <sup>71.</sup>

While these tactics were neither new nor exclusive to the A-1E, they proved effective in the Vietnam environment and were expected to continue

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in future operations.

# Relaxation of Rules of Engagement

A constant frustration to USAF commanders in Vietnam was the partially self-imposed restriction placed on air operations, particularly the need for VNAF personnel to ride on A-1E flights and for VNAF observers to mark all targets before A-1E's could strike. Also, in 1964, the US Air Force was still required to fly with VNAF markings on their aircraft, a requirement which certainly had an effect on morale, especially since the U.S. Army was not bound by this restriction.<sup>72.</sup>

The 2nd AD was taking a hard look at these restrictions in late 1964 when it became apparent that the conditions which existed when they were imposed no longer applied. One important change was made in the first week of November when the requirement for a VNAF student pilot to be aboard A-1E strike planes was lifted. A VNAF "observer" was permitted and this could be a low ranking airman who went along for the ride. This was the same set-up that existed prior to A-1E operations in June. When A-1E operations started, a requirement was made that student pilots ride the right seat. This resulted in delayed flights as it was not always possible to have enough student pilots around.

It was difficult enough having "sandbags" available. Colonel Bethea, 34th Tactical Group commander, said that using PFC's and Airman Basic's was a problem as they were irresponsible, did not show up when required, and were not properly motivated.<sup>73.</sup> While only a few sorties were not

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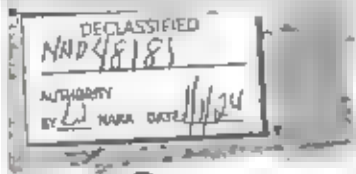
flown due to the lack of observers since the system for using airmen was begun on 1 November, there were many delayed take-offs for this reason.  
74.

The problem was highlighted on 4 January 1965 when an acute need for an observer made it necessary to release one from prison, feed him, put him on the mission, and then return him to jail. However, VNAF had promised that 44 observers would be made available for A-1E flights at Bien Hoa in early January and when these showed up, the problem would be alleviated. It was estimated that an additional 20 sorties a day could be flown if observers were immediately available.  
75.

Action was also taken to remove the need for a VNAF observer to mark all targets. An impressive example of what could be done with a USAF observer marking targets was an incident on 11 December when circumstances dictated that a USAF PAC fly alone in directing strikes against a large concentration of VC's. Captain Stanton Musser, the PAC at Ca Mau, was unable to convince his Vietnamese observer to go up with him on an observer mission in support of an armed convoy under attack. After receiving approval from the Province Chief, Musser flew alone and over a period of nine hours, directed sixteen A-1E's in strikes against an estimated 1500 VC's leaving some 400 dead on the ground.  
76.

Colonel Allison C. Brooks, Deputy Commander of 2nd Air Division, recommended elimination of the ruling that a VNAF PAC identify and mark targets. He said: "Any trained man on the ground or in the air

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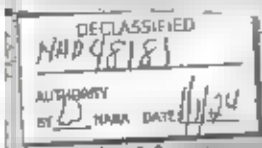
ARVN, VNAF, US Army, or USAF - should be permitted to identify, designate, and mark a target whenever combat conditions so require". He also said that USAF markings should be used on USAF aircraft since the original conditions which made it necessary no longer applied. "Maybe we are still fooling the VC, but it is doubtful", he said. <sup>77.</sup>

Nevertheless, the use of "sandbag" observers on A-1E flights starting 1 November and the slight relaxation of the rules for VNAF observers in O-1F FAC missions as indicated in Captain Musser's flight, showed that some progress was being made.

#### Commencement of Operations at Can Tho

Limited A-1H operations out of New Can Tho airfield in the delta were started on 20 December when five VNAF A-1H's of the 520th Fighter Squadron began a daily rotation program from Bien Hoa. Plans called for the aircraft to fly to Can Tho in the morning, stand alert and fly a mission if called upon, returning to Bien Hoa at 1700. If the aircraft were all committed early in the day, they would be replaced by other Bien Hoa-based aircraft. <sup>78.</sup> Can Tho was about 95 miles southeast of Bien Hoa and roughly midway between Bien Hoa and the southern tip of South Vietnam. Although completion of construction of the base with its 6,000 foot runway was still some months off, it was decided to use it on the temporary basis. When Can Tho was completed and the ARVN could provide 24 hour security, the 520th FS was to make a permanent move.

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Can Tho, in the heart of an area where VC operations were on the upswing, was being considered as a base for two permanently based squadrons. By the end of December, it was still not decided whether these would be two VNAF squadrons or one VNAF and one USAF squadron. The base was planned for completion in June 1965 but it appeared at the end of 1964 that it would not be finished until October 1965.<sup>79.</sup>

When initial plans were made for construction of a new base at Can Tho some three miles from the old PSP strip base, security in the area was fairly good. However, at the end of 1964, as the base neared completion, this was no longer the case. Harassing fire was being received on the runway, and the perimeter, defended by two ARVN battalions, presented a problem of defense due to the wooded terrain. Every morning, before using the mobile tower at Can Tho, a check was made for booby traps.<sup>80.</sup> The VC were also cutting the land line from Can Tho almost every day and communications depended on the single sideband radio net, which was not always working too well. The wire cutting began only two days after the wire was strung up on poles down the highways.<sup>81.</sup> The problem of communications was alleviated somewhat when the tower at old Can Tho was put on the same frequency as the new Can Tho tower.

The number of aircraft deploying to Can Tho was cut in January to three, but a new tactic was being employed. When an airborne alert flight over the delta expended, the Can-Tho based fighters were launched as replacements, saving some 30 minutes over the time it would take to bring them from Bien Hoa.

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Increase in AIO-FAC Strength

In September, 20 FAC's on temporary duty from US STRICOM arrived in Vietnam to fill important vacancies in all four Corps areas in order to get the VNAF Air Request Net in operation. These personnel were to be replaced in January 1965 by permanent duty personnel. By 1 December, the VNAF Air Request Net was completed with 50 AIO/FAC's, 17 AIO's and necessary radio equipment and operators in place in all Corps areas. However, while major progress had been made in educating ground personnel on the use of the VNAF Air Request Net, implementing instructions which would make the net the official means of forwarding immediate air requests had still not been issued by the High Command at the end of 1964. VNAF at the end of the year was also taking action to place VNAF AIO's in the field alongside USAF AIO/FAC's to deal with the language problem and eliminate the connotation of a unilateral operation.

With the completion of the net, the USAF had an AIO/FAC at every Corps and Division headquarters and a FAC with every ARVN regiment and with special zone areas and Special Forces teams.

The problem of a shortage of liaison aircraft continued through December. While action had been taken to move some of the 19th TASS O-1F's to Corps areas, there was still a need for more liaison aircraft in the Corps areas. USAF aircraft had been deployed to the maximum extent and VNAF was starting to deploy its liaison aircraft.

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They were reluctant to do so because of lack of security on airstrips, difficulty in supporting aircraft and crews and loss of control over the aircraft and crews. It was essential, in the opinion of 2nd AD, that permanent deployment of these liaison aircraft to field areas take place in order to improve localized skills in visual recon, increase the capability to secure and use ARVN intelligence, and to better direct accurate air strikes against known targets. 84.

Only 12 USAF O-1F aircraft of the 22-plane 19th TASS were available in December for combat tasks and these were deployed to the maximum. It was believed that there was a requirement for four squadrons of 30 aircraft each to do the job right. In a one month test in Vinh Binh Province of constant visual reconnaissance by the same FAC, it was found that VC activity was appreciably decreased, offensive ground action was more effective with low casualties, interdiction targeting and strikes were more effective, and damage assessment was more accurate and timely. It was clear that the application of this technique to other areas would be equally effective. 85.

While most of the effective reconnaissance in country was carried by the O-1F observers, successful tests of infra-red sensing photo equipment in two RB-57's evolved into a new in-country recce capability. In October, a program was inaugurated in which the IR section of the 13th Recon Tech Squadron telephoned photo interpretation results to III Corps CTOC upon completion of film processing. This proved to be very successful. It allowed ground forces to react against enemy

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targets (camp fires) in a much shorter time than would be the case were the IR photos flown or mailed to III Corps.  
86.

#### New Weapons

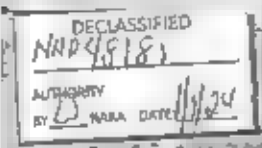
Following the visit to 2nd AD in August of a Headquarters USAF Munitions Survey Team headed by Brig. Gen. L. P. Loesch, Director of AFSSS, there were plans for the introduction of more modern weapons into the 2nd AD inventory. New manufacture of the 100 lb M-47 PWP bomb, early availability of the MK-81 Snakeye bomb, expedited production of a new fragmentation warhead for the 2.75 inch rocket, and early availability of the CBU-14 munition, resulted from the team's visit.

The 2nd AD's capability was also increased following approval in September by the JCS of use of the MK-44 Lazy Dog munitions in country and CBU-2 munitions out of country. Also, locally manufactured Daisy Cutters (extension rods) were being used on all size bombs in December to achieve above ground detonations.

Also, the highly successful tests of the side-firing C-47 which is covered elsewhere in this history added a new capability for night fort/hamlet defense. A follow-on program was started with the PC-47 to provide an airborne alert capability.

The Air Force Test Unit (AFTU) an agency of MACV's Joint Research and Test activity (JRATA) was working on several projects to improve AF weaponry. One was the XM-75 podded gun, a 40mm electrically operated, fully automatic, grenade launcher mounted in a pod which

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contains 150 rounds and fires at the rate of 240 rounds per minute. The equipment, tested in the U.S., arrived in Vietnam in mid-October and 38 combat sorties were flown against jungle areas and huts in small clearings during the period 23 October - 29 November. Out of 4731 rounds fired, 26 malfunctions were experienced. While the areas where the tests were made were not accessible, air observation showed explosions at ground level where they could be effective against personnel type targets. APTU was recommending that minor modifications be made and that operational quantities be procured for use in the RVN from A-1E aircraft. <sup>87</sup>

Use of the side-firing SUU-11A gun pods on A-1E aircraft as well as G-47's was also recommended in the RVN following tests made late in the year. In 39 sorties flown between 23 October and 1 December, 95,937 rounds were fired with eight malfunctions experienced. Fire was observed to be accurate, penetrating and to saturate the targets. <sup>88</sup>

#### Crop Destruction Operations

As the Viet Cong strength increased in South Vietnam, the enemy was having to rely more and more upon food supplies to maintain combat forces. Prior to October 1964, crop destruction was assigned exclusively to VNAF who sprayed from the H-34's with relative inefficiency. On 3 October 1964, the three plane C-123 Ranch Hand detachment at Tan Son Nhut, employing joint USAF-VNAF crews, began its first crop destruction operation in the southeast corner of Phuoc Long Province. Four sorties

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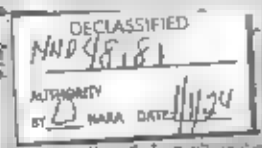
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were flown and an estimated 280 hectares of rice, corn and manioc were destroyed. The operation resumed on 4,5, and 6 October when eleven sorties were flown in the same area, resulting in an estimated 1150 hectares of rice, corn, banana trees, and manioc destroyed. Another six sorties flown on 12 and 13 October destroyed another 280 hectares of crops in Phnom Long Province.

A highly successful chemical crop destruction mission was carried out by the Ranch Hand detachment between 28 Nov - 4 Dec in Phuoc Thanh Province. Fifteen sorties were flown, destroying an estimated 1000 hectares of rice and 225 hectares of corn, manioc, and pineapple. On these sorties, as well as on the October sorties, hits were sustained by all aircraft from ground fire. According to an agent report, the VC Phuoc Thanh Provincial Committee reportedly stated that the rice destroyed in the operation would have fed the VC troops in the area for two years. The population in the area was reportedly confused and upset with some people saying they intended to flee to GVN-controlled areas.

This addition of a crop destruction mission to the Ranch Hand detachment came at a time when there was a marked increase in defoliation requirements generated from the field. As many as 100 sorties were being requested against individual major VC strongholds. These new targets demanded both an increased spray capability plus a less vulnerable method of spraying the target with three gallons of defoliant per acre. More and better equipment was introduced to allow

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this in August. It was fitted into the three C-123's of the detachment. A fourth C-123 was added to the detachment later in August giving it<sup>91.</sup> a 25 per cent increase in capability.

Following the success of these first USAF crop destruction efforts, MACV planned a more expansive program in War Zones "C" and "D" during the February and March 1965 growing season. Due to the abundance of foodstuffs available in IV Corps, MACV did not feel that a crop des-<sup>92.</sup>truction program in that area would be effective.

#### Improved Coordination with U.S. Army Helicopter Operations

On 1 August 1964, a joint 2AD-USASCV operating instruction was published which called for joint USAF-Army procedures for providing support for units or posts under attack, reaction forces dispatched to assist an area or unit under attack, offensive, pre-planned, search and destroy operations, and routine movements of independent ground forces, convoys or trains. The joint instruction, which was discussed in the previous history, served to better coordinate the operations<sup>93.</sup> of both services.

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# SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONS

There was an almost monotonous conformity in the pattern of significant ground operations conducted in the latter half of 1964. In the main, both government initiated operations and VC initiated operations that resulted in contact and battle, were based upon tactics which appeared to have changed little from previous years. The enemy relied heavily upon setting a situation for the arrival of reaction forces and then ambushing the reaction force. Government operations were primarily ground oriented with extensive use made of "vertical envelopment" tactics, although there was an increasing employment of tactical air as air cover and close support as the status of both the USAF and VNAF improved.

The significant operations covered here are essentially as described in the MACV weekly Military Reports and they tell a story of an increasing scale of action and greater employment of tactical air. Operations selected as significant are those listed in the MACV weekly Military Reports.

## Operation Ching Nghia and Thang Long 11

Ching Nghia 36 and Thang Long 11 were joint search and clear operations conducted by the 5th and 7th Divisions and controlled by III Corps. They covered the vicinity of the border between Han Nghia and Long An Provinces about ten kilometers south of the town of Duc Hoa. Operations began on 10 July at 0600 hours. The objective was to locate and destroy an estimated two VC battalions and a VC company which had been operating against friendly installations in the area.

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These units were using the border between the two provinces as a means of avoiding friendly pursuit after VC attacks. The VC also used the dense forests of the operational area to regroup and conduct training between operations. <sup>94.</sup>

Friendly units for Chinh Nghia 36 in the 5th Division area were headquarters, two Ranger battalions, two M113 troops, one river boat company, and one battery plus a platoon of 105 mm howitzers. A battalion was in reserve at Duc Hoa. The 7th Division, for Thang Long 11, employed headquarters, one infantry battalion, one Ranger battalion, one airborne battalion, two M113 troops, two regional force companies, one river boat company, two platoons of 105 mm howitzers and a platoon of 155 mm howitzers.

The plan was to launch the main effort south from Duc Hoa, with the main effort generally along the axis of the Vam Co Dong River, while simultaneously launching Operation Thang Long 11 north from Ben Luc with its main effort using the same river as its general axis of advance. This maneuver was designed to entrap the VC between two forces.

After engaging a VC company about five kilometers south of its line of departure, the 30th Ranger Battalion lost two KIA and 24 WIA and killed ten confirmed VC with an estimated 70 KIA and WIA carried away.

Farther south, at approximately 1700 hours, this battalion was surrounded by an estimated two VC battalions. At 1735, a request for US Army armed helicopters was received through the VNAF Air Request Net. The request was simultaneously processed by Army and VNAF. Two

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VNAF A-1H's were airborne at 1805 hours. They reported that they could not establish radio contact and returned to base and landed with ordnance still aboard.

US Army Aviation flew 64 armed helicopter sorties with the first two airborne at 1745. Suppressive fire missions were flown continually until 0200 when the weather forced a two hour delay. At 0400 hours, these missions were renewed and they continued until 0815 hours. A total of 79 flying hours was recorded. One US crewman was fatally wounded.

At 2015, the first of five flare aircraft (2 VNAF, 3 USAF) arrived in the area and dropped throughout the night expending 297 flares.

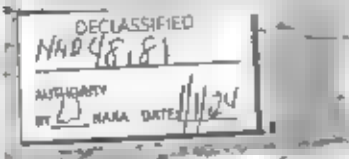
On 11 July at 0630, the reserve-infantry battalion was heli-lifted into the 30th Ranger Battalion area by 24 US Army UH-1B's. Three USAF A-1E's pre-struck the intended landing zone.

Forces moved north according to plan but the only VC contact was made by the airborne battalion about five kilometers north of the line of departure.

Results: Friendly losses, 11 KIA (including two US), 39 WIA (including 12 U. S.); VC losses, 11 KIA confirmed, 70 KIA and WIA carried away.

MACV Comment: "The extensive flying performed during the night of 10-11 July by Army helicopters is an indication of the growing capability of Army Aviation to render support during hours of darkness. This could prove very valuable to GVN forces in future night operations against the VC".

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Operation NTN Cau Ngang

Operation NTN Cau Ngang, a fix and destroy operation controlled by the 14th Regiment, was started at 1100 hours on 14 July. Its purpose was to destroy the VC forces that attacked the Ngu Lac Post in the eastern part of Vinh Binh Province. These were the 501st and the 505th companies of the Cau-Long -1 Local Force Battalion and the 507th Local Force Company with about 100 men per company.

One Ranger Battalion, one infantry battalion, one M113 troop and a supporting platoon of 105 mm howitzers were used. The idea was to attack to the south from Cau Nang using inter-province Road 35 as a general axis of advance. The M113 troop was on the east flank, the infantry battalion in the center and the Ranger Battalion on the west flank.

All units moved south at 1100 hours and at 1630 hours, about ten kilometers south of Cau Ngang, all three units engaged VC units. The Ranger Battalion, on the west flank, was the most heavily engaged. The VC units broke contact and withdrew with all units in pursuit but only the Ranger Battalion maintained contact. It later broke contact and withdrew a short distance to permit two VNAF A-1H aircraft to conduct a close air support strike at 1750 hours.

After the strike, ARVN units remained in position for the night. On the 15th, the attack was resumed, but they could not locate the VC.

Results: Friendly losses were 17 KIA and 48 WIA; VC losses

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were 100 KIA and nine weapons.

MACV Comment: In summary the operation was well executed until contact was broken by the Ranger Battalion for the air strike. After the air strike, no immediate effort was made to regain contact with the VC. No attempt was made to block his escape. 96.

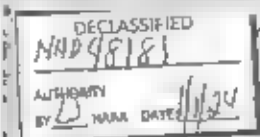
Operation Nam Duc Long

On 11 July at 0300 hours, a sector controlled fix and destroy operation was initiated to relieve the Vinh Chao Post ten kilometers south of Vi Thanh in Chuong Thien Province. The post was attacked at 0100 hours by three VC companies employing mortars and recoilless rifles. Three RF companies were sent to relieve the post backed by a platoon of 105 mm howitzers giving artillery support from Vi Thanh.

The plan was to send two companies abreast directly south through the flooded rice paddies toward the post. The third company was to advance southwest along the north bank of the Kinh Xang Canal. Seven kilometers south, the two companies became heavily engaged with a strong VC force, later identified as the 96th Main Force battalion plus three Local Force companies. The ARVN company moving along the canal was diverted to help.

Two additional RF companies were committed at 0700 hours. One company attacked to the southwest from the village of Hoa Luu. Three kilometers from the village the unit made contact with the VC, suffered extremely heavy casualties, and ceased to function as a unit. The other company, attacking to the southwest at 0700 hours along

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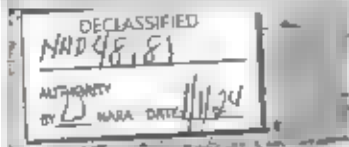
the north bank of the Minh Xang Canal, engaged the VC about three kilometers from their departure point.

This reaction force was supported by seven VNAF/USAF close air support sorties and six US Army AH-1B helicopters providing suppressive fire. The helicopters also resupplied the besieged post with ammunition and flew in artillery ammunition for the supporting howitzers. The supporting artillery platoon provided continuous fire support during the entire operation. Hueys provided medical evacuation.

Between 1500 and 1700 hours on 11 July, four of the five RF companies withdrew. The fifth, the last to engage the VC, stayed in position about five kilometers northeast of Vinh Chao Post until relieved by an infantry battalion. This infantry battalion, plus a Ranger battalion and another infantry battalion, were part of operation Dan Chi 46 which was initiated to relieve the units involved in Operation Nam Duc Long and the defense of the Vinh Chao Post. This operation, Dan Chi 46, did not produce any significant contact; however, the VC withdrew in the face of the strong forces moving into the area. This post, which was never overrun, was manned by 46 Popular Force troops. The garrison lost nine KIA, 19 WIA, and three MIA, but did not lose any weapons.

Results: Friendly losses were 58 KIA, 72 WIA, 76 MIA (captured), 110 weapons lost, also, one 60 mm mortar, one 30 caliber machine gun, and five AN/PRC 10 radios; VC losses were five KIA (confirmed).

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Results of air and artillery not confirmed but believed heavy.

MACV Comment: "...The two primary reasons for the high friendly losses were the superior size of the VC units and the limited training of the RF companies of the reaction force. With the exception of the one company that maintained contact until the VC withdrew, the reaction force had only two weeks training. 97.

#### Operation Tay Chuong Thien

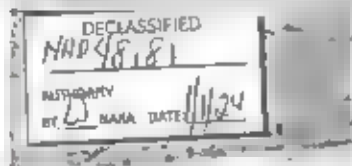
As a result of a VC night attack on Xang Cut outpost in the early morning hours of 21 July Operation Tay Chuong Thien was initiated at 0700 hours to relieve the post.

The 1st Battalion, 31st Regiment, left Vi Thanh and moved west along Provincial Road 40. At the same time, two Popular Forces companies moved from the opposite direction along the same road to meet the battalion at the road junction one kilometer northeast of the town of Huong Tho. The two forces were then to go south to reinforce the Xang Cut post. Two 105's were left at Vi Thanh to support the 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry, while one 105 supported the RF companies from the town of Go Quao.

When the lead elements of the battalion progressed about ten kilometers west of Vi Thanh, at about 1030 hours, the VC ambushed the column. The VC force was estimated at one Battalion (possibly the T70) on the north side of the road augmented by two local force companies deployed on the south side of the road.

An observer in an O-1F flying at low altitude had passed over the VC without detecting them because of their expert camouflage.

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The VC opened fire using machine guns and 60 mm and 81 mm mortars. Several platoon-size VC elements attempted to knife through the three kilometer-long battalion column at different points to break it into isolated smaller units. A sharp battle was fought.

Meanwhile, the two RF companies had approached the area and hearing the firing, they advanced to the ambush site. After moving about one kilometer, they were taken under fire by the VC. Because of the extreme range, the 105's, about 12 kilometers away, could not fire.

Immediately after the 1st Battalion was ambushed, about 1030, a request for air support was submitted. This was received at the AOC after processing through IV ASOC at 1050 hours. Two VNAF A-1H's, on ground alert at Bien Hoa, were scrambled and airborne at 1130 hours. They conducted an air strike about one kilometer west of the site at 1220 hours, with no results determined. Later in the afternoon, two other strikes were conducted. One was by USAF A-1E aircraft which destroyed ten structures and some sampans.

Results: Friendly losses were 41 KIA, 56 WIA (including one US), three 60 mm mortars, two .30 caliber machine guns, 20 individual weapons, nine AN/PRC 10 radios, and one AN/GRC 9 radio; VC losses were three sampans (used to evacuate wounded) sunk by aircraft fire, 200 KIA and WIA (RVNAF estimate) were carried away.

MACV Comment: VC had extensive knowledge of troop movements. Ambush site was selected midway between the two artillery positions, out of range. Expert VC camouflage eluded O-1F detection. Combat air support, having to come from Bien Hoa, extended the reaction time.

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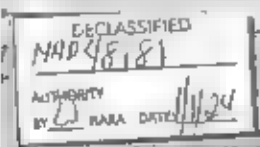
98.

On 22 July in Ham Nghia Province a fix and destroy operation called Chinh Nghia 39 was initiated at 1130 hours from Trung Lap to relieve VC pressure in the area. The operation was controlled by sector on the first day and shifted to 1st Armored Cavalry Squadron on the second day.

One company and one M113 troop made contact with the VC who withdrew to the ambush area, with the company and M113 troop pursuing. The VC's then opened fire from prepared positions with 57 mm and 75 mm recoilless rifles destroying one M113 with a direct hit and disabling four others. The friendly force then fell back to wait to await the arrival of other elements.

**Abstract**





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August at 0630 hours, the VC hit the outposts and communications were immediately lost. A reaction force of one infantry company, a PF platoon, a tank platoon, and a regimental headquarters section supported by two artillery platoons were alerted. They were deliberately held at Ben Cat until an O-1F observation plane overhead was in communication with the post and artillery platoons.

The reaction force proceeded north along Route 13 with the tank platoon just off the road followed by dismounted troops. At 1100 hours, one kilometer north of Ben Cat, the VC engaged the friendly force with five 57 mm recoilless rifles firing at the lead tank while the dismounted troops were attacked from the right flank. A tank caught fire and burned, and other tanks returned the fire wounding or killing about 40 to 50 VC.

Concurrently, the post at Ben Cat was subjected to small arms fire from three sides while the adjacent dependent housing area received 81 mm mortar and small arms fire. Friendly forces disengaged at the ambush site and returned to the post of Ben Cat where they were deployed in defensive positions around the perimeter of the outpost to await reinforcements.

A request for air support was submitted at 1100 hours. Aircraft arrived in the vicinity of Ben Cat at 1215 and orbited for 15 minutes until radio contact was re-established. The initial commitment was four USAF A-1E's which expended their weapons in the target area. The second flight arrived at 1325 hours. It consisted

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of two VNAF A-1H's which expended against an estimated 200 VC in a rubber plantation. Pilots reported 30 VC KIA. A third flight of VNAF A-1H's expended its weapons at 1745 hours.

The 1st Airborne Battalion from the general reserve was dispatched by vehicle from Saigon at 1630 hours closing into Ben Cat at 2030 hours. On the following day, 29 July, the 1st Airborne conducted a search and rescue operation through the area of conflict with no results of significance.

The 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry, was ordered to reinforce Ben Cat and moved east from Ben Suc. It was ambushed by a VC force at 0530 hours on 30 July about 10 kilometers west of Ben Cat. The VC attacked from the north supported by 60 mm and 81 mm mortars. The ARVN column broke under the assault and troops fled south into a flooded rice paddy where they came under intense 30 caliber machine gun fire.

Aircraft was requested immediately to provide illumination, close air support, and medical evacuation. A C-47 flareship was over the area at 0540 but could not drop because of no radio contact. Artillery support began at 0532 but it was ineffective because of the proximity of VC troops to friendly forces. Armed choppers arrived at 0740, at which time friendly troops were in neck-deep water in a rice paddy and ineffective as a military unit.

From this time until 1820, USAF, VNAF and US Army aircraft supported the operation.

Another battalion, the 1st Battalion of the 46th Regiment, was

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committed on 30 July making three in the area to relieve VC pressure. VC in the area were believed to be two battalions of the C58th VC Regiment with a strength of 600 to 750 men.

Results: Initial friendly losses in the three-day action were 45 KIA (one US), 59 WIA, 14 MIA, one .50 caliber machine gun, four .30 caliber machine guns, one 2½-ton truck, one 60 mm mortar, two AN/PRC 10 radios, five BAR, 42 individual weapons, and one M-24 tank damaged; VC losses were two KIA confirmed and an RVNAF estimate of over 300 KIA/WIA by air strike.

MACV Comment: Combat and logistic support provided by VNAF, USAF, and US Army was timely and effective. Intelligence in the area was neither timely nor accurate. The 1st Battalion, 8th Regiment, which broke under VC fire, did not perform well as a disciplined unit and there was no evidence of forceful leadership by the battalion commander. 100.

#### Operation Chinh Nghia 52

Chinh Nghia 52 was a search and destroy operation which opened at 0600 hours on 7 Nov 64 in Binh Duong Province of the III Corps under control of the 5th Division. Center of the operation was about seven kilometers west of the city of Tam Dau Mot, a flat terrain of rice fields and several villages.

Seven VC units totaling about 400 men were in the area. These were the Quyet Thang Main Force Company, Cu Chi Local Force Company, one militia company, one militia platoon, and three militia squads.

Friendly units were the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 8th Regiment,

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the 4th Marine Battalion, an armored cavalry troop and the 5th Recon Company. Artillery support from 105's and 155's was provided. An airborne alert battalion was maintained on alert status at Tan Son Nhut as a reserve. VNAF A-1H, USAF A-1E and US Army UH-1B were in support.

The plan called for a coordinated attack at 0700 hours on 7 Nov 64. The 1st Battalion of the 8th Regiment and the 4th Marine Battalion were to advance abreast from the village of Tan Thanh Dong with the 1st Battalion of the 8th Regiment on the right using a north-south road as an axis of advance. When they reached a road junction about four kilometers west of Thu Dan Mot, the Marine Battalion was to swing west and seize a series of objectives along the East-West Highway. The final objective for this battalion was the southern half of the village of Tan Hoa Thon, 11 kilometers west of Thu Dan Mot.

The 1st Battalion was to continue its advance moving two kilometers to the northwest of the road junction and join the 2nd Battalion at an objective at that location. The 2nd Battalion was to advance southeast toward this objective from its departure point at the village of An Pim. After meeting at the designated objective, the two battalions were to advance west to seize a series of objectives culminating in a double envelopment of the final objective at Tan Hoa Thon in conjunction with the marine battalion.

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Two G-1F's were to fly over the area, one with an artillery observer and one for forward air control. Fighter cover was to be over the area from 0700 to 1800 hours. A platoon of helicopters was on ground alert.

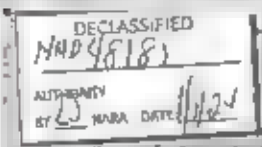
There were only small contacts as the units moved according to the plan with several friendly casualties resulting from booby traps.

On 8 November, four USAF A-1F's conducted a strike and claimed five structures destroyed and five damaged. The VNAF aircraft conducted a strike on 9 November at 1625 hours. Another strike by two VNAF A-1H's on 10 November at 0930 hours produced no known results. US Army helicopters provided suppressive fire on three occasions.

Results: Insignificant with friendly losses including three ARVN KIA, 24 WIA, one MIA with rifle; VC losses were six KIA, one captured, four grenades and a number of underground passages destroyed.

MACV Comment: Analysis shows that this was a complete failure as a search and destroy operation. The expenditure of resources and time spent were not justified by the negligible results obtained. The very size of the operation in terms of troops committed made it difficult to achieve surprise. This was compounded when the troop units moved to their departure points on the day prior to the operation and then bivouaced overnight. Consequently, the VC withdrew the major portion of their forces, leaving only small groups to harass the government forces. The operational plan was thoroughly

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prepared in terms of supporting air and artillery; nevertheless, this operation is typical of several unsuccessful large scale operations conducted by the 5th Division. 101.

Operation Thang Long 17

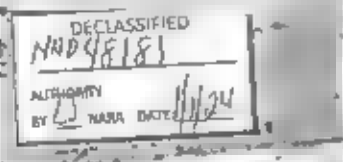
Thang Long 17, a joint search and destroy operation, controlled by the 7th Division, was begun on 10 Aug 64 at 0700 hours in Dinh Tuong Province about 15 kilometers west of My Tho. A VC company was in the area and also a newly formed VC "B" Binh Dinh platoon with an estimated strength of 50 men.

The ARVN committed an airborne battalion, two Ranger Battalions, an infantry battalion and an M113 troop. A platoon of 105 mm Howitzers supported the operation.

The plan called for a three-pronged attack south from National Highway 4 with the M113 troop on the east, the airborne battalion in the center and the infantry battalion on the west flank. The two Ranger Battalions would simultaneously launch an attack five kilometers to the south of Highway 4, moving from east to west to create an effective blocking force.

All units made contact within two hours with the strongest made by the two Ranger Battalions and the infantry battalion. They moved forward toward the infantry battalion on the west flank and a VC force was caught between the two friendly forces. This was a lucrative target so a VNAF strike was called for with the Rangers holding the blocking position.

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The air strike hit the VC pocket of resistance between the Ranger Battalion and the infantry battalion. Ground troops then moved in to join. It was verified by body count that the strike was very successful.

Results: VC losses were 42 KIA (body count), three ~~men~~ captured, and three weapons.

MACV Comment: Operation was well planned and executed. When the situation developed a suitable target, tactical air was requested and responded in about twenty minutes with excellent results. 102.

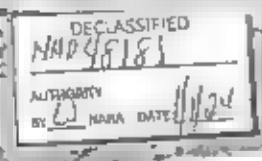
#### Operation on Highway 13

On 12 Aug 64 at 0700 hours, the 5th Division controlled a search and destroy operation which proved one of the greatest air-mobile operations to date but results were disappointing.

The operation was called to attack some 2500 VC personnel. Some 1500 of these were combat personnel engaged in aggressive activity along Highway 13 from Ben Cat to Chau Thanh. They were organized into a main force regiment including two infantry battalions and a combat support battalion. There were also two mobile companies, a local company, armed elements at a training center, agricultural production camps, machine shops, stockades, plus guerrilla and militia units of the villages and hamlets.

The 8th Regiment, 1st Battalion, 43rd Regiment, the 30th, 31st, and 39th Ranger Battalions, the 1st and 5th Airborne Battalions and a troop of M113 carriers were committed. One battery of 105's

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and one of 155's supported. Tactical air was also available.

The plan was to surround the VC with a series of blocking positions located around an approximate circle with a radius of 15 kilometers, the center of which was located about 12 kilometers northwest of the town of Ben Cat. The distance between the blocking positions around the periphery of the circle averaged about five kilometers.

The main maneuver elements were an infantry M13 task force under control of an airborne battle group headquarters. These two forces were to launch a coordinated attack at 0700 on 12 August to seize an objective located in a rubber plantation in the east central portion of the operational area about nine kilometers to the west of Highway 13.

The airborne force was to be helilanded nine kilometers to the northwest of the rubber plantation in the east central portion of the operational area, attack south and join the 7th Regiment force at the rubber plantation. A no fire line was established just to the northwest of the objective to coordinate fires in support of the two forces.

The airborne landing had to be delayed from 0700 hours to 0900 because of fog in the landing zone area. To further complicate matters, the 5th Division Tactical CP was delayed enroute to its field location headquarters because of VC roadblocks. The fire support coordination center which was with the CP was unable to contact the Air Force to stop pre-strikes against selected

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Eighty-five USA helicopters augmented by 12 VNAF CH-34's were to airlift two airborne battalions in two lifts, one at 0700 and the other at 0900. These were to be preceded by a pre-strike of the primary landing zone at 0640 on 12 August, but due to low cloud cover this could not be accomplished.

The airborne force and the infantry M13 force linked up at the rubber plantation at 0900 hours on 14 August with little VC contact.

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A-1H aircraft flew diversionary missions of interdiction. Six other A-1H's flew air cover for the remainder of the day. VNAF flew 63 missions and USAF 39 missions in support.

Results: Friendly losses were four KIA (one US), 21 wounded (two US); VC losses were 17 KIA, four men captured, two suspects, and four weapons.

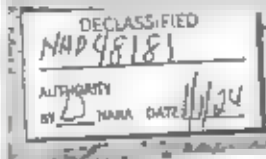
MACV Comment: Results were negligible but some lessons were learned. Highway 13, the route of the 5th Division CP and important blocking elements, should have been cleared by an advance force supported by engineer troops.

Alternate means of communication in the FGCC might have enabled contact with supporting elements despite the roadblock. This would have stopped the air strikes at the original planned time. An airborne tactical command post has proved helpful in the past but none was used here.

The failure in communications resulted in the premature air strikes which gave the VC three hours to withdraw forces. Connected with this factor of advance warning, was the steady drone of helicopters over Saigon Wednesday night enroute to Tan Son Nhut airport. The massing of the helicopters was a tip off that a big airmobile operation was in the immediate offing. The first air strike pinpointed the locale of the attack.

Blocking positions around the periphery of the operational area were too far apart to seal off the VC escape routes. "When the number of troops which can be allocated to an operation is a

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limiting factor, the next action should be to reduce the scope of the operation to insure better success against a more limited target."

No weather recon was conducted that morning. This would have provided additional time to adjust to changed conditions.

VNAF employed the largest number of helicopters (14) in a single operation in its history. They performed well. 103.

#### Ambush at Ba Tre

At 0800 on 20 August, four battalions supported by artillery and naval teams and Army air started a search and destroy operation in Kien Hoa Province about ten kilometers northwest of Ban Tre in reaction to a VC attack against Phu Tac Post.

Forces moved by truck and river boats to sweep the area. Operation went as planned but only contact made was two small engagements with no friendly killed and a reported five VC killed.

When the operation reached a point where the troops were to march to a road junction to get on trucks for return to home stations, the surveillance aircraft were released and the units started marching. There was no G-1F in the air from the USAF.

When the units started the return march to the trucking point, they were hit by heavy mortar, recoilless rifle and small arms fire from the right flank. The battalion commander called for reinforcement. Moments later, 60 men in ARVN fatigues without caps appeared from the direction of the 3/12d, which was the reinforcing unit. The 60 men (VC) opened fire and overran the Rangers. The 3/12th also was hit at this time.

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A call was made for artillery and it was used until 1930 hours. Air strikes were called for and the planes were on target about 1900 hours. The planes were not used however, because of the danger of hitting friendly troops.

After the battle, thirty VC packs and some documents were found in a nearby house. One document contained the list of names and birth dates of the members of the 550th VC District Company and showed that the youngest age listed was 14 years and the average age of the men in the unit was 17 years.

Results: Friendly losses were 85 KIA (four US), 60 wounded, 91 MIA, 19 individual weapons, three crew-served weapons, and four grenade launchers..

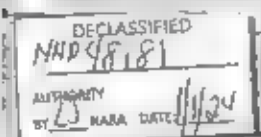
MACV Comment: The ambush was set up for the morning move of the force. Upon completion of the pursuit operation, the ARVN commander had a choice of several return routes and unfortunately, picked the wrong one. Another route might have avoided the ambush.

Failure of the ARVN units to conduct a ground reconnaissance of the route in advance was critical. "Air reconnaissance would have had no value in this wooded terrain."

The fact that the commander of the 3rd Battalion, 12th Regiment, was wounded early in the action reduced the effectiveness of the battalion.

The fact that the pursuit operation was completed, and the ARVN units returning to their base and were fatigued after the day's operation, may have led to a lack of security. This, if true, is

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an indictment of the commander because it is well known that the daylight hours from about 1630 on are critical from the standpoint of ambushes.

#### Operation Dan Chien 1

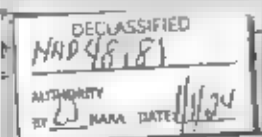
Dan Chien 1 was initiated on 12 Feb 64 by the 2nd Division in Quang Tin Province in the II Corps. Objective was to consolidate the coastal plain area and extend government control westward through the foothills to the Tranh River with emphasis on the more populated areas. It terminated on 16 August at 1700 hours. Results were 316 VC KIA, 24 PW, 15 suspects, 143 weapons plus miscellaneous explosives and documents. Friendly losses were 106 KIA, 131 WIA, three deserters, and 38 individual weapons.

The campaign was considered a success in that it maintained the initiative over the VC by employing area saturation techniques. It showed that the VC could not cope with operations of extended duration when keynoted by constant patrolling, because such tactics inhibit their movement and resupply.

Two battle groups built around infantry regiments with supporting troops were employed and each had an artillery battery in support. VNAF provided the combat air support with interdiction missions predominating. USMC and VNAF helicopter squadrons supported the campaign with air landed assaults, and with resupply and medical evacuation missions. UH-1B's provided armed escort.

Joint US-Vietnamese teams surveyed the hamlets in the campaign area to determine the sociological, economic, political and military

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status of each hamlet with emphasis on existing defensive measures. People recovered from VC control were being resettled.

Better results were expected if psychological operations and civic action projects were undertaken. It was found that when the VC withdrew, their infrastructure in the hamlets and villages was neutralized. However, there was difficulty in generating a food surplus even though the potential existed for fruits, coconuts and tea. This was because of limited transportation. 105.

#### Operation Dan Chien 2

Dan Chien 2 was conducted simultaneously and contiguously with Dan Chien 1 just north of the other campaign and covering the eastern half of Quang Nam Province. This was also controlled by 2nd Division and had the same objectives. The operation opened on 12 February 1964.

Against some 850 VC in the area, the government had pitted two battalions, five composite RF and PF companies, and a supporting platoon of 105 howitzers. As the campaign progressed, one of the battalions, a ranger battalion, was withdrawn and replaced by two battalions of the 5th Regiment, leaving three of the 5th's battalions in action.

Area saturation techniques were tried with VNAF providing air support, mainly interdiction missions. The operation terminated on 18 August.

Despite government inflicted casualties, the VC had gained in

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overall strength, reportedly by infiltration. However, they had withdrawn farther into the mountainous areas.

Results: Friendly losses were 70 KIA, 71 WIA, 15 MIA and 34 weapons; VC losses were 121 KIA, 16 PWs, 73 individual weapons.

MACV Comment: While the VC were driven back to the mountainous areas and the ones remaining in villages driven underground, there were still problem areas. There were too many people for the good land available. Poverty and apathy continued. The people don't grow enough rice to keep themselves and as a result have to import.

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#### Operation Thang Long 19

Thang Long 19 was a follow-up operation to the ambush in Kien Hoa. Its objective was to pursue the 516th VC Battalion which had ambushed the 3rd Battalion, 12th Regiment and elements of the 41st Ranger Battalion on the previous day. It started at 0800 hours on 21 August.

Employed were five battalions and two M113 troops with mortar and howitzer support. Also VNAF and US Army helicopters. The idea was to encircle the VC forces and then destroy them with a coordinated attack by ground maneuver elements supported by artillery and air.

Two encirclements were executed; the second initiated when the first did not yield a contact.

At 1545 hours, about four kilometers from its departure point,

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the ARVN airborne unit contacted a well dug in VC company. Supported by artillery and air strikes the battalion drove the VC from their position. This was the most significant contact of the operation, with 25 VC KIA against ten friendly KIA and 26 wounded.

Results: VC losses were 98 KIA, 43 PW's, 20 hand weapons, two AN/PRC 10 radios; ARVN losses were 17 KIA and 45 WIA.

MACV Comment: The coordinated use of naval and air elements to block VC escape route was commendable. <sup>107.</sup>

#### Operation at Vinh Xuong

On 5 September at 1150 hours, an estimated VC battalion attacked Vinh Xuong and Tan An Post in the vicinity of WT205055. Air support was requested at 1210 and VNAF fighters diverted to attack at 1310. Between 1400 and 1430, VNAF fighters conducted air strikes and reported three ships in the Mekong River near the ARVN outpost of Vinh Xuong. The second flight of VNAF fighters attacked the target at 1430 and reported one surface vessel crossing back into Cambodia and firing at VNAF fighters at 2300 feet without scoring hits.

At 1435 hours, the VNAF PAC operating in the target area reported three surface ships firing on Vinh Xuong outpost. Beginning at 1337 hours, USAF F-102 aircraft operating in flights of two providing CAP under radar control at a distance of 20 miles from the border.

At 1440 hours, the F-102's returned to Tan Son Nhut to refuel. At 1458 hours, two VNAF fighters were intercepted by a MIG 15 type aircraft which penetrated RVN airspace in the vicinity of WT200055.

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It closed on the VNAF and made two passes without expending. It followed the VNAF fighters to the vicinity of Tab Chau some 13 kilometers inside the RVN. The CRP at TSN reported a radar track, presumably the MIG-15 returning toward Phnom Penh.

A third flight of two VNAF A-1H's sighted four surface craft on a southerly course approaching four VN LCV's. These ships directed intense AA fire at the VNAF fighters. The A-1H's then attempted to bomb the ships without success and the ships withdrew to the north.

Results: ARVN losses were 103 KIA, 296 WIA, 67 MIA (captured) and 194 weapons; VC losses were 164 KIA, 29 captured, and 60 weapons lost.

#### Operation Vi Dan 110

Operation Vi Dan 110 was a major pre-planned operation against a sizable VC force which was launched at 0600 hours on 19 Aug 64 as a search and destroy operation in Phu Yen Province. Air support was not called for and as a result, accomplishments were minimal. The operation was controlled by the 23rd Division and encompassed the areas both north and south of the Giang River for approximately 25 kilometers inland.

Intelligence showed several VC units in the area each with about 500 men. All were mobile and they remained no more than five days in a bivouac area. These units were: 102nd Local Force Reconnaissance Company, the B377 and B375 Local Force Companies and four district platoons. Although not confirmed, they were believed to have been

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supported by the 106th Heavy Weapons Company and two local force platoons. Also, there was a "peoples force" of 2700 persons, 5 per cent armed, who assisted in intelligence and construction.

ARVN used three task forces and assigned each an area of operations for an extended period of time. The plan was to designate successive objectives a distance of 20 to 25 kilometers from the first objective to the final one.

Task Force 1 was the 3rd Battalion of the 44th Regiment plus an RF company. Task Force 2 was the 1st Battalion of the 44th with an armored cavalry troop. Task force C was a Ranger Company and a RF company supported by a platoon of 155mm howitzers which were also committed to Task Force B.

No air support was requested.

The task forces advanced and made contacts with company-size units.

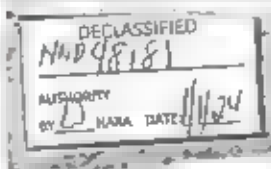
Results: VC losses were 56 KIA with an estimated 74 KIA/WIA carried away, nine PW's, three weapons, and 12 suspects; friendly losses were 18 KIA, 45 WIA, and one weapon lost.

MACV Comment: "This was a well conducted operation with a kill ratio in favor of the RVNAF forces. The major fault was the lack of employment of air support."

Operation Lam Son 129

Lam Son 129 was begun at 0800 hours on 18 Sep 64 as a search and destroy operation in Quang Tri Province. It was under control

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of the 1st Regiment of the 1st Division in an area about 15 kilometers north of Quang Tri City.

Intelligence had reported steady VC infiltration in this area posing a threat to full control of the area by RVN authorities. Many assassinations of key personnel were carried out. Much of the infiltration was by sea with the enemy slipping through the inadequately equipped VM Junk Division Number 11.

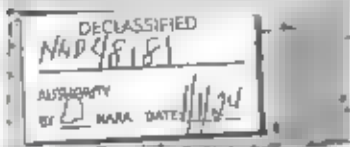
The operation was to last 15 days. Elements of the regiment dressed as popular forces personnel to deceive the enemy who had recently tended to avoid contact with ARVN units.

The maneuver elements deployed in their respective areas and sought to find the VC. First contact took place on 20 Sept at 0700 hours near the village of Le Xuyen. Using air and artillery to maximum advantage the 2nd battalion of the regiment was taken under command by the regimental commander who set up blocking units with additional reserves called in.

Results: Friendly losses were seven KIA to 77 VC KIA. One A-1H was shot down killing the pilot.

MACV Comment: Preliminary analysis indicated that the coordination between ground, air and naval units was excellent. The employment of artillery and air strikes in close coordination with maneuver elements are the main factors which influenced the low casualty rate for the friendly forces while permitting them to inflict heavy casualties on the VC.

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### Operation Dan Cau Ke

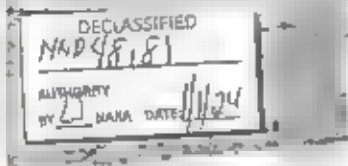
Operation Dan Cau Ke, carried out under the control of the 43rd Ranger Battalion, was begun on 26 Sep 64 at 1000 hours in an area about 5 kilometers southeast of the town of Cau Ke in Vinh Binh Province. This was a search and destroy operation directed against VC forces which included the 511th Cau Ke Local Force Company of about 100 men and two companies of the Vu Oun Long Battalion.

The 43rd Ranger Battalion was reinforced with a 4.2 mortar platoon and the 3rd Troop, 2nd Armored Cavalry Squadron (M113). Air support was provided by four A-1E aircraft with a forward air controller in an L-19.

At 1030 hours, leading elements of the 43rd, conducting a sweep northeast toward Cau Ke, came under VC fire. Under pressure of the advancing battalion, the VC withdrew to prepared positions around a pagoda. The battalion commander decided to advance on two axes, one battalion on the right and two companies to the left.

The two companies, which were moving across the flooded paddies surrounding the pagoda, were pinned down by VC fire about 1130. The battalion commander, disregarding the US advisor's advice to shift the attack to the right axis, tried to continue to the left while supporting by fire from the right. When this proved impossible, the right advanced by fire and maneuver until it too was pinned down 300 meters from the VC positions. At 1330 hours, an enlisted US adviser was killed while trying to assist in directing fire on a VC machine gun.

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The VC, in an unusual change of tactics, continued to defend their positions throughout the day and night using three to five machine guns and 60 mm mortars. After sunset, ground fog and an increased volume of VC fire between 1900 and 2100 hours prevented the rangers from advancing.

Artillery and mortar support were almost non-existent. The 4.2 mortar platoon was low on ammunition and only fired four rounds. A request was made for 105 mm howitzer support but supporting fire was not forthcoming.

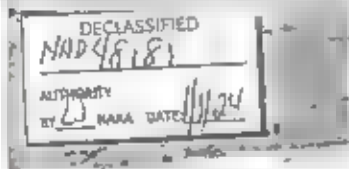
Finally the Ranger Battalion commander requested and received USAF A-1E air strikes of napalm and bombs on the VC positions. Ten sorties were flown in support. An A-1E crashed but the crew was rescued. Cause of the crash was undetermined. Ten armed helicopters of the Delta Aviation Battalion also provided combat support, liaison, and visual surveillance missions. Flare ships were put over the battlefield at night.

Late in the afternoon of 26 Sep 64, the 9th Division ordered M113 troop to assist the 43rd Battalion. At 1945 hours, this troop was stopped by a VC blocking force, estimated at two companies northwest of Can Ke and about six kilometers from the Ranger Battalion.

Two M113's were damaged by recoilless rifle fire in the troop's initial encounter. This force remained in this position, engaged with the VC, until the action ended.

About 2400 the VC began to withdraw and the Rangers were able to occupy the pagoda complex. By 0800 hours on 27 September, contact was lost and a link up with the M-113 troop was accomplished.

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Results: Friendly losses were ten KIA (one US), 27 WIA, and one A-1E destroyed; VC losses were 20 KIA, one AR and six individual weapons. Forty VC casualties were reported carried away.

MACV Comment: Purely conventional in nature. Lack of decisive results was partly due to inability to take advantage of air strikes to maneuver. "Close air support utilization, coordination, and re-  
action time were excellent throughout." <sup>111.</sup>

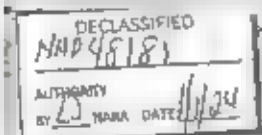
#### Operation DN Ben Cat

Operation DN Ben Cat was a road clearing operation started at 0600 hours on 16 Oct 64 in Binh Duong Province under the control of the 1st Armored Cavalry Squadron. It was launched from Ben Cat south along Route 13 using the 2nd Battalion of the 7th Regiment (minus one company), an armored cavalry troop, a tank platoon, an additional ARVN platoon, and two platoons of Popular Forces, backed by a platoon of 105 mm and a platoon of 155 mm howitzers.

Units were formed into two teams. Team A moved across the country on a general axis of Route 13, about three kilometers east of the road. Team B moved south parallel to Route 13 on both sides of the road. Swampy terrain kept the tanks on the road most of the time.

About three kilometers south of Ben Cat, Team B encountered a VC force in an ambush position. Artillery and Hueys gave support and the team overran the VC position killing many and capturing documents. Tanks engaged VC recoilless rifles and 50 caliber guns with three tanks heavily damaged. The VC counterattacked at 0835 hours and at one time had Team B surrounded. Supported by artillery and Hueys, the

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team fought its way out and north about one kilometer where they reorganized.

Team A attacked from the south and were supported by the choppers and artillery. The post at Ben Cat was receiving 60 mm mortar fire. The VC force, estimated to be of battalion size, broke contact and departed the area at 1230 hours.

Tactical air was called at 0925 hours but by the time they arrived on position at 1030 hours, the friendly forces had occupied the target area. The aircraft remained in the area about 30 minutes and departed without expending ordnance.

Results: Friendly losses were 16 KIA, 25 WIA, one M-24 Tank destroyed with two damaged, two .30 and two .50 caliber machine guns, and 16 individual weapons; VC losses included 70 KIA (estimated 100 KIA/WIA carried away), nine weapons, a .50 caliber barrel, ground mount and ammunition. 112.17

#### Operation Dan Chi 80

Dan Chi 80 was a search and destroy operation under control of the 21st Division conducted 10 kilometers northwest of Bac Lieu in the Bac Lieu Province. It began at 0900 hours on 16 Oct. 64.

The enemy force was the C75th VC Company of the Soc Trang Provincial Mobile Battalion armed with AR's, 60 mm mortars and submachine guns. An agent reported that this force had moved into three hamlets about seven kilometers northwest of Bac Lieu.

A hammer and anvil maneuver was planned using the 42nd Ranger

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Battalion to attack west into columns from attack positions on Route A, seven kilometers northwest of Bac Lieu. The 44th Ranger Battalion was to attack to the north from the hamlet of Phuoc Thanh five miles west of Bac Lieu. Upon seizure of the final objectives, the attacking units would form a U-shaped anvil on north, south and east. Then an Eagle Flight would be airlanded farther west by helicopter to form the hammer to drive the VC to the east toward the blocking units.

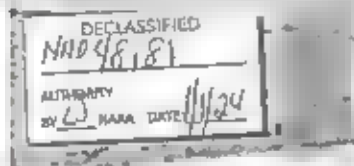
The Ranger Battalions moved into position after only slight VC contacts. At 1105 it was decided to commit the first Eagle Flight. Checking the LZ's the control HU-1B CP spotted VC taking cover on the banks of a canal along which the Rangers were advancing and UR-1B suppressive fire was used. Under the suppressive fire the 21st Reconnaissance Company attacked north along the canal rolling up the VC flank and for an hour and a half, fierce fighting raged as the VC defended the position. A second Eagle Flight was landed at 1330 hours to join the fight.

Despite UR-1B support from 1300 to 1430 hours, the 44th Ranger Battalion was unable to make any headway. Two other Eagle Flights were committed and not until 1525 was an air strike by four A-1E's carried out. This was after the VC had withdrawn to the east.

Results: Friendly losses were six KIA, 25 WIA (one US); VC losses were 89 KIA and 13 PW's.

HACV Comment: Striking ratio of casualties. A weakness was

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the failure to use artillery support in favor of continued UH-1B support in some instances where artillery would have had a better affect on the dug in VC. Thirty-four helicopters were used and they reported 62 VC killed.<sup>113.</sup>

Operation Thang Long 13/34

This was a search and destroy operation controlled by 13th Regiment in Vinh Binh Province to locate and destroy the C801st Main Force VC Company and the Chau Thanh and Duc Tou local force VC platoons numbering some 300 men.

The operation started at 0600 hours on 19 Oct 64. Employed were two battalions with support from artillery. Eight USAF A-1E aircraft and six A-1H aircraft provided air cover.

The only contact was made at 1030 hours when a VC force was spotted about two kilometers north of the town of Hoa Hung. Armed helicopters were used to deliver suppressive fire.

The aircraft over the area were not called and did not expend ordnance.

An American newsman covering the operation was wounded in the leg.

Results: VC losses were 34 KIA. Thirty-one of these were killed by Hueys and troops landing from the Eagle Flight killed the remainder.

MAGV Comment: "Air strikes were available but not called for because of the short duration of the operation and the proximity of the helicopters during the fighting."<sup>114.</sup>

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Operation Tu Luc III

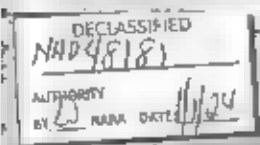
Tu Luc III was a sector controlled search and destroy operation in Quang Ngai Province. It was initiated on 23 October at 0600 hours with the operations area situated about 20 kilometers southwest of Quang Ngai City, bordered on the east by the South China Sea and on the west by National Route 1. The southern boundary was the Tra Cau River.

Units committed were the 2nd Battalion, 51st Regiment plus one company, a ranger task force made up of two companies from each of the 37th and 39th Ranger Battalions, and Armored Cavalry Platoon, and two RF companies. A platoon of 105 mm howitzers located at Trach Tru provided artillery support and tactical air support was provided from Danang and Pleiku.

Intelligence had indicated that the Duc Phu and Mo Duc Local Force VC companies were in the operational area to harvest the rice and return to the mountains. This was only half correct. The VC had no intention of returning to the mountains. The villages were well fortified and the VC made a determined stand at these villages. Elements of an unconfirmed local force VC battalion was also reported in the area with the total force numbering about 400 VC.

The scheme of maneuver was to form a blocking position at the southern extremity of the area with the ranger task force. The RF companies blocked on the west along Route 1 and a junk division patrolled the coast to block on the east. With the area sealed, the infantry battalion deployed three companies on line and one in

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reserves. The force proceeded from the north, clearing the area as they moved south, to link up with the Rangers.

The operation went according to plan except for the Rangers, who engaged a VC force while moving into their blocking positions. The VC fell back to prepared positions from which they repelled the attack. Only sporadic VC contacts were made by the infantry battalion and they arrived in the vicinity of the ranger units about 1700 hours.

The Ranger task force had probed and found the areas to be well defended. Three rows of protective wire, separated by mine fields, were in front of the VC prepared positions. The infantry battalion, reinforced by an RF company, was ordered to seal off the northern half of the village while the Ranger task force ringed the southern section. The two VC occupied villages were Tan Tu and Thuan Thanh Ap both of which had been surrounded by the ARVN forces. Friendly forces spent the night of the 23 October in this position.

At first light on 24 October, a coordinated attack was launched by the infantry battalion and the Ranger task force. Even with strong artillery support, they could not penetrate the VC positions. The lack of engineer support and special equipment for breaching the fortifications hampered the operation.

Not until 1300 hours was a request for an airstrike using napalm submitted to I Corps ASOC. Ready aircraft were loaded with conventional armament and a delay was experienced due to the down-loading of conventional ordnance and uploading of napalm. VNAF

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responded with five sorties, three from Pleiku and two from Danang. The first aircraft arrived on target at 1540 hours and a near continuous strike was conducted until 1805 hours.

The strike was not considered effective by the USAF FAC, due to the method of delivering the napalm. The aircraft dropped the napalm from about 2000 feet at the end of a near vertical dive, thus failing to produce the desired spreading action of the burning napalm.

The attack continued after the air strike and the wire was breached by the M113's at the northern edge of Thuan Thanh Ap. The infantry battalion swept through the village to the river and the ranger battalion linked up there with the infantry battalion. Both units withdrew to the area surrounding the village and again took up defensive positions for the night.

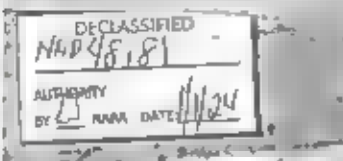
On the morning of 25 October, the units again swept through the villages burning them to the ground and destroying stores of rice and gardens. VC's resisting were killed or captured. The operation terminated at 1100 hours on 26 October.

Results: Friendly losses were six KIA and 22 wounded; VC losses included 35 KIA, 14 PW's, 100 suspects, and nine individual weapons along with a quantity of rice.

MACV Comment: "Had the planning for the attack on the 24 October included requests for tactical air support, the operation would not have been forced to wait for air support at a critical time."

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# Operation Dan Chi 84

Operation Dan Chi 84 was launched on 2 Nov 64 in An Xuyen Province under control of the 21st Division to locate and destroy a 700 man VC force which had been interfering with the river and canal traffic from Camau to Nam Can. These were the 306th Main Force Battalion, the U Minh 2 Local Force VC Battalion, and the Dan Doi Local Force VC Company. Part of the mission was also to clear the Bay Hap River.

Friendly forces included the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Regiment, and the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 33rd Regiment, and a regional force company. The 14th Ranger Battalion, designated as an Eagle Flight on standby, was in reserve near Camau. The ranger battalion was airlifted in 13 troop carrier helicopters escorted by 11 Army Hueys.

Ten helicopters were hit by ground fire.

The plan called for a movement south from Camau using the Bay Hap River as an axis of advance. The operation was scheduled to take four days with the first day used for positioning troops. The operation began on 2 November with the three battalions moving south. No contact was made on the first day, but on the second day at 1230 hours (3 November) light contact was made about 125 kilometers south of Camau.

The major contact occurred at 1430 hours. It resulted from VC harassment of Khai Quang Post about 20 kilometers northwest of Camau outside the area of operations. A medevac helicopter, escorted by two armed helicopters, was sent to evacuate wounded and was fired

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on by the VC. Since it was apparent that a large VC force was in the area, a decision was made to commit the Eagle Flight which was standing by at Camau.

A force of 56 rangers from the 44th Battalion landed 300 meters east of the post between two elements of an estimated VC company. They killed 15 VC trying to withdraw. Additional helicopters brought in more rangers for a total force of 272 between 1700 and 1800 hours. Rangers proceeded along the line of VC positions eliminating them one by one.

No air was committed during this operation although VNAF A-1H's were standing by.

Results: VC losses were 56 KIA, one captured, one 60 mm mortar and 26 weapons. Pilots reported an estimated 100 KIA by suppressive fires from helicopters.

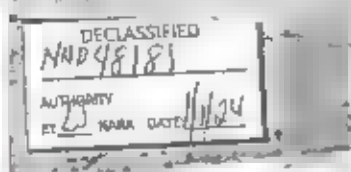
MACV Comment: The decision to quickly commit the reserve against an enemy concentration adjacent to the planned operational area shows decisiveness and aggressiveness on the part of the commander. This operation again demonstrates the success gained through the use of an effective ground unit supported by helicopters in the implementation of the "Eagle Flight" techniques.  
116.

#### Operation Da Nang 2

Operation Da Nang 2, under sector control in Quang Nam Province, was conducted at 0800 hours on 19 November about 11 kilometers west-northwest of Danang.

An 80-man VC company in the area was attacked by two ranger

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companies of the 11th Ranger Battalion, an RE company and two PF platoons. They were backed by a 105 mm platoon. US Army aviation supported the operation with 15 UH-1B helicopters.

This was an Army ground operation moving units against the VC who withdrew northward. A helilift company landed north of the VC.

As the helicopters approached the landing zone, they received ground fire from the VC. The armed Hueys fired suppressive fire in return routing the VC.

Results: There were no friendly losses; VC losses were 35 KIA, one captured, 32 suspects, and four weapons.

MACV Comment: "A successful vertical envelopment." 117.

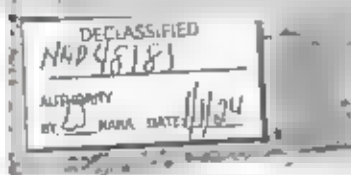
# Operation Thang Long 27

Operation Thang Long 27 was a 7th Division controlled search and destroy operation initiated on 19 November at 0830 against 900 VC of the 514th Main Force Battalion in the southern part of Dinh Tuong Province.

Friendly forces consisted of four infantry battalions, a marine battalion, an armored cavalry squadron, a river assault group with three 105's providing support. USAF/VNAF and army air were employed.

Thang Long 27 included a deception operation whereby the infantry battalion deployed along a road seven kilometers east of Cai Lay against an objective that had been subjected to artillery fire. A landing force of three battalions was positioned in the river due south to heighten the impression of an impending attack. In conjunction, leaflets and loudspeakers were used to warn civilians to depart.

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After this demonstration, according to the plan, an infantry battalion and an armored cavalry squadron would move south from Cai Lay and assume blocking positions in the vicinity of Long Trung. The three-battalion landing force would proceed to a position due south of Ba Dua where they would land and advance north to Ba Dua. The deception battalion would revert to reserve status.

The two infantry battalions and marine battalion, moving north, made light contact until they reached a point two kilometers southwest of Long Trung. Here, a large VC force was encountered. At 1130 a pitched battle using artillery and close air support was fought. The reserve battalion was lifted by helicopters to a position northwest of the action to complete the perimeter of the blocking force. This action lasted until 1930 hours.

The night of 19-20 November was spent in the area of the VC encounter, but no further contact was made.

Air employed included four A-1E's, four A-1H's and 37 UH-1B's 17 of which were armed.

Results: Friendly losses were eight KIA; 38 WIA; VC losses were 24 KIA with an additional 137 carried away.

MACV Comment: The kill ratio of 3:1 in favor of ARVN with confirmed figures plus the 137 reported carried away, reflect a significant success for ARVN forces.

#### Operation Quyet Thang 436

Quyet Thang 436 was launched on 20 November at 0400 hours in Quang Nam Province under 2nd Division control about 14 kilometers west of

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Quang Nam and south of the Thu Bon River. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 4th Regiment plus RF and PF companies moved against the VC's seeking food because of the flooding of their area.

Units moved by foot against the area with one battalion moved later by helicopters in an enveloping action. First contact was made by the 3rd Battalion about two kilometers from the departure point at 0600 hours on 20 November. Helilifted units joined the attack.

On the morning of 21 November, the remnants of the VC forces tried to cross the Thu Bon River in sampans and were attacked by VNAF A-1H's with no results.

Results: Friendly losses were three KIA, 19 WIA, and three weapons; VC losses were 67 KIA, 17 captured, and 24 individual weapons. 119.

#### Operation Phong Hoa 1

The largest heliborne operation in the history of the war was flown on 18 November using 115 helicopters in an action west of Ben Cat in Binh Duong Province. The operation was supported by VNAF.

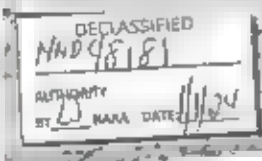
Troops employed included 12 battalions, three M113 troops, artillery, engineers, and a river assault group.

Results: VC losses were 163 KIA (83 by VNAF), and 68 captured; 120.  
Friendly losses were 22 KIA, 76 WIA, and one MIA.

#### Operation Thang Long 28

Thang Long 28 was initiated on 27 November at 0700 hours under 7th Division control in Minh Tuong Province. Center of the operation was eight kilometers northeast of the town of Cho Goa which is

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12 kilometers east of the Province capital of My Tho. The mission was to locate and destroy the 313th Binh Phuoc Local VC Company and a platoon of the Cho Gox local VC Company which were operating in the area. Terrain generally was flat with flooded rice fields and dense tree clusters interspersed. The weather was clear and sunny.

Three battalions, two armored troops and two RF companies were employed with eight 105's in support.

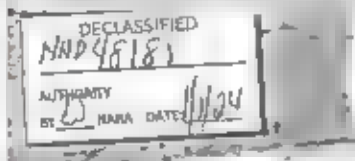
The scheme of maneuver called for blocking forces on the south, west and north. The main effort was to be made by the 2d Battalion, 10th Regiment and the 3rd Marine Battalion attacking abreast from northeast to southwest with the Marines on the left (south).

The operation went as planned. Units took blocking positions and the first contact was made at 0855 hours when the 2nd Battalion, 10th Regiment, encountered an estimated VC platoon about one kilometer southwest of its departing point. After inflicting seven casualties on the ARVN, the VC withdrew to a large cluster of coconut and mangrove trees where they joined an estimated VC platoon.

One of the cavalry troops attacked but withdrew partly because the VC-fired rifle grenades were mistaken for 57 mm recoilless rifle fire. Also, the firing of the troop endangered the 2nd Battalion, 10th Regiment, which was attacking from the east and crossing into the line of fire.

The reserve battalion, the 3rd Battalion, 10th Regiment, was heliborne to the area and landed one kilometer north of the VC position. The Division CG was present when the unit landed at 1350

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hours. He ordered it to mount the M113 carriers and attack immediately. Artillery was called and 300 rounds were fired. When the artillery lifted, fourteen M113 carriers which the infantry mounted, attacked south against the position at 1420 hours. Armed Hueys fired suppressive fire in front of the carriers.

The infantry dismounted from the carriers, closed with the VC, and tough fighting began. The engagement terminated at 1700 hours.

The VNAF kept two A-1H's over the area from 0905 to 1250 hours but no ordnance was expended in support. This was true even though communication between VNAF, Army Aviation, and ground elements was good throughout the operation.

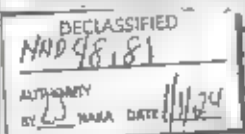
Results: VC losses were 46 KIA, seven captured, 14 individual weapons, 22 hand grenades, ten anti-personnel mines, 14 rifle grenade launchers; Friendly losses were eight KIA and 19 WIA.

MACV Comment: The aggressiveness of the ARVN was commendable, and good planning for the operation was evident. "If air cover had been planned for the entire day, it could have improved the operation. This was done for the morning only. A napalm strike against the VC foxholes during the main engagement in the afternoon would have been most effective against this type of target."  
121.

#### Operation Lam Son 136

Operation Lam Son 136 was mounted on 26 November. It was a search and destroy operation carried out by the 1st Regiment of the 1st Division against the 804th VC Battalion in the mountainous area about 25 kilometers west of the city of Quang Tri. The area

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of operations extended from Cam Lo south about 12 kilometers and then east about five kilometers.

Employed in this operation were the 2nd Battalion, 1st Regiment, one company of the 3rd Battalion, two RF companies, and two sections of the armored cavalry. A battery of 105 mm and one of 155 mm was used in support along with VNAF A-1H and H-34's.

The scheme of maneuver was to deploy three companies abreast and attack to a point five kilometers south of Cam Lo as part of a ruse. The companies would return to Cam Lo and announce that the operation had terminated. The next day, the units would resume the attack from the last point previously reached and press south to the Giang River and then east to Ba Long.

The operation was carried out as planned. On 26 November, minor contacts were made three times during the day and ten VC were killed with one ARVN, killed and three wounded.

The units then returned to Cam Lo and told the population the operation had terminated.

At 0700 the next day, the friendly companies moved south, three companies abreast, with the ARVN company mounted on armed personnel carriers in the center. Light contact was made at 0845 and the VC withdrew to the west. The friendly forces continued in pursuit and engaged a VC force dug in one kilometer west of Thie Tuong. The mounted force swept over the south flank of the position, reversed direction and swept back over the north flank firing all weapons as they went. They reversed again and went through the center.

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Air support had been requested at the inception of the action. The aircraft arrived 15 minutes after the intense ground action and dropped napalm, 44 260-pound fragmentation bombs, and strafed the suspected departure route of the VC. Artillery fired 40 rounds of 155's.

Results: Friendly losses were only one KIA with 18 WIA (14 were on one truck which hit a mine); VC losses were 73 KIA, one 57 mm recoilless rifle, and two 60 mm mortars, three light machine guns, one AA mounted machine gun, and a quantity of ammunition.

MACV Comment: The operation to date shows the results of detailed planning and aggressive execution. 122.

#### Operation Da Nang 5

Da Nang 5, in Quang Nam Province, was conducted on 30 November under control of the Da Nang Special Area. Five companies with artillery and Huey support were employed against a reported two VC companies.

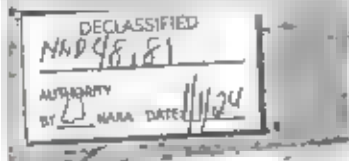
The scheme of maneuver was to provide complete encirclement through the use of blocking forces to ensure the destruction of the VC forces once located. The use of helicopters helped to achieve surprise.

Results: VC losses were 49 VC KIA with another 41 VC carried away plus 31 captured. 123.

#### Operation Binh Tuy 45

Binh Tuy 45 was the other operation initiated on 2 December near the village of Thanh My using an RF company against a reported VC

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platoon which entered the hamlet a day earlier. Armed Bueys and artillery plus blocking positions by ground units caught the VC by surprise.

Results: VC losses were 22 KIA, eight captured, and an additional 20 reported carried away; friendly losses were two KIA and three MIA. 124.

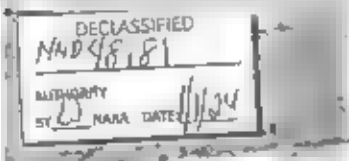
#### Early December Battles

An Lao: The VC attacked the An Lao District Headquarters in Binh Dinh Province on 7 December. A reaction force was ambushed by an estimated two-battalion VC force. Friendly losses were 28 killed, 50 wounded and 22 reported missing. Two 4.2 mortars and about 200 rounds of ammunition were captured. Additionally three armored personnel carriers were destroyed and their .30 and .50 caliber machine guns lost to the enemy. VC losses were estimated at 100.

Quang Tin: An estimated VC battalion attacked and overran a battalion CP and 105 mm howitzer artillery platoon in Quang Tin Province. As a result of the quick and effective employment of a three-battalion-size reaction force supported by artillery and air, the position was re-occupied and 162 VC were confirmed killed plus large quantities of crew-served and individual weapons captured. Friendly losses included 25 ARVN and one US KIA, 44 ARVN WIA and two 105's damaged.

Chuong Thien: Two separate battalion-size VC initiated ambushes in in Chuong Thien on the afternoon of 12 December were turned into

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qualified government successes by effective air support of the ambushed forces. Although not supported by body count, an estimated 500 VC were killed by air. The VC also attacked a district capital shortly after the ambushes. Friendly casualties included 27 ARVN killed and 56 wounded with two US advisors killed and one missing. 125.

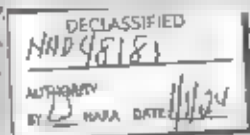
Operation Dan Chi 92/SD

Dan Chi 92/SD was begin on 5 December at 0800 hours centering on an area about 15 kilometers NNE of the city of Ca Mau near the boundary of An Xuyen and Bac Lieu Provinces. The 21st Division controlled the operation. The terrain was flat and the weather was clear.

Purpose of the operation was to locate and destroy the U Minh 2 VC Battalion and the 1008th and 1009th Local Force VC companies reported to be in the area with a strength of 700.

Committed to the action were four battalions, a cavalry troop and a platoon of 105's and 155's. One infantry battalion was to block to the north and one to the northwest of the operational area. The third infantry battalion and a Ranger battalion were to advance from the south to the north on parallel routes to destroy the VC in the area. The cavalry was to attack to the northeast toward the center of the operational area and link up with the infantry and Ranger battalions. The reserve units were to be employed as Eagle Flights. An element of deception was provided by having the 42nd Ranger Battalion hire boats for a move to the south of Ca Mau.

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The main maneuver force, the 3rd Battalion of the 33rd Regiment and the 44th Ranger Battalion, crossed the demarcation, near the village of Giang Ke at 0845 and advanced north.

The two battalions advanced abreast and at 1315 hours encountered a strong VC position about five kilometers north of their LD. VNAF A-1H aircraft on an air cover mission were called in to conduct a strike on the VC position. The aircraft delivered a mixed ordnance load of bombs and napalm against the target.

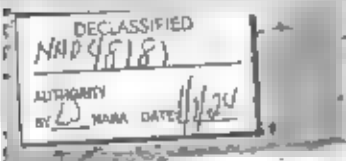
At 1400, two Eagle flights landed the 21st Division Reconnaissance Co. and the first lift of the 42nd Ranger Battalion close to the northeast of the VC position. Armed UH-1B's delivered suppressive fire against enemy guns in the LZ. Two more Eagle flights were landed close to the northwest of the VC position, catching the VC between the Eagle flight troops and the two battalions to the south.

After a strong defense and heavy casualties, the VC withdrew to the west and east after darkness.

The 105 mm howitzer platoon at Ca Mau could not support the action because it was out of range. The 155's delivered from Thoi Binh harassing and interdiction fire during the night. A flareship arrived at the scene at 2030 hours and supported the operation for two hours but there were no subsequent contacts. The operation closed the next day at 1900 hours.

Results: VC losses were 138 KIA, three captured, three 60 mm mortars, five machine guns (three on A mounts) 51 individual weapons and two AM/PRC 10 radios; friendly losses were 25 KIA and 66 MIA.

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MACV Comment: Commitment of reserve through Eagle Flights was a decisive factor in achieving success. VC were forced to fight in place during daylight or be cut down if they moved across the open rice fields. "The use of napalm during the air strike on the VC position proved to be most effective against the VC who were dug in..."<sup>126</sup>

Operation Phuoc Tuy 33

This operation was conducted on 9 December. It employed a Ranger and a Marine battalion with a troop of the 1st Armored Cavalry Squadron. An airborne battalion and two Ranger companies were committed after the operation developed.

The operation started at 0700 and was controlled by the Phuoc Bien Special Zone when it developed. Units moved according to a plan with no contact. Then at 1330 hours the Province Chief got word that a large force of VC was about to move west across the highway just north of Ba Ria, the VC initiated an ambush by detonating a mine under the lead armored personnel carrier. The troop commander was killed and only eight of the 14 personnel carriers were able to break out by 1700 hours.

While the break-out attempts were underway, the Province Chief requested air strikes. Armed helicopters arrived within 15 minutes, and on request, began to mark targets for air strikes. Fourteen fighter sorties were flown and nine helicopters delivered suppressive fire against the ambush site.

The eight M113's tried to move back to the ambush site to pick

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up the wounded in conjunction with a company of the 30th Ranger Battalion which was helilifted to an area 1000 meters short of the ambush site. At about 2100 hours, this relief force arrived at the scene to search for ARVN casualties and equipment. The search was interrupted by what was reported to be a heavy attack. The relief force returned to Ba Ria.

For the next two days, with Special Zone in control, the government forces moved to the ambush site and to an area of mangrove swamps and hills where the VC were believed hiding.

Results: Friendly losses were 12 KIA, 31 WIA, 10 MIA, six M113's, six 3.5 rocket launchers, one 81 mm mortar one .50 caliber machine gun (all burned) and two .50 caliber machine guns, five .30 caliber machine guns, two BAR, 24 small arms and 19 radios (captured by VC); VC losses were one KIA and one carbine. ARVN estimated 100 casualties carried away.

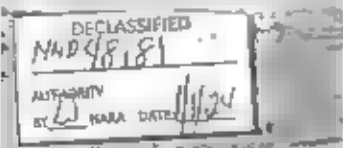
MACV Comment: "On the positive side, the rapid reaction of VNAF and the armed helicopter force to the request of the Province Chief for support reduced the number of friendly casualties and losses of material.."  
127.

#### Operation Lam Son 140

Lam Son 140 was a 1st Division-controlled search and destroy operation-initiated on 13 December as a reaction to a VC attack on the village of La Chu which is three kilometers west of Hue.

The VC attack came at 0300 hours on the 13 December reportedly by elements of the 802nd VC Battalion and the X105 VC Company. The

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3rd Regiment of the 1st Division was alerted at 0900 hours to conduct an attack on the VC at An Do and Bon Tri. Friendly forces were the 1st Battalion, 3rd Regiment, plus two platoons of M113's and a Regional Force Company.

At 1100 hours, the friendly force withdrew and requested an air strike. Two US Army Hueys were requested to deliver fire on the village. The VNAF air strike arrived on target at 1300 hours. Another air strike was conducted at 1455. Lack of air to ground communication reduced the effectiveness of the air strikes.

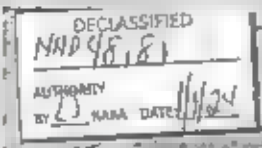
No further effort was made to take the village that night but two flareships kept the area illuminated.

At 0600 hours the next morning, one company assaulted the village but the VC had left, leaving only wounded behind and seven bodies. In the village were 50 foxholes, one zigzag trench about 60 meters long and a prepared crew served weapon position. The VC force defending the day before was estimated at two companies reinforced with heavy weapons.

At 1000 hours on 13 December, simultaneous with the attack on An Do, one infantry company mounted in two platoons of M-113's launched an attack on Bon Tri. The attack was broken off because of dense woods that prevented good deployment and a heavy concentration of automatic weapons, mortar and 57 recoilless rifle fire.

An air strike was requested along with artillery and armed helicopter support. The ARVN company commander, mistakenly reported his unit's location in the village and negated the request for artillery.

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Two flights of Army Hueys delivered suppressive fire for another assault on the village which did not succeed.

The lack of ground to air communication again reduced the air support effectiveness. The force attacking suffered loss of one M113 from a direct hit which killed one and wounded ten. A US sergeant was lost from small arms fire.

The force, still mounted, moved around the village and tried to enter again but were repulsed. They then withdrew while air strikes and artillery hit the village. Since there was no ground to air communication, the aircraft delivered their ordnance into the center of the village while the defensive positions were on the perimeter.

At 2215 hours, the force dismounted and moved into the village behind the M113's with a USAF flareship providing illumination. The objective was taken at 2330. The force then spent the night outside the village and entered next morning at 0800 hours on 14 December. They found 40 VC bodies and took five prisoners. About 200 defensive positions and three crew served weapons positions were found on the perimeter of the village.

Results: ARVN losses were 13 KIA (one US) and 33 wounded; VC losses were 58 KIA and nine captured.

MACV Comment: The operation brought limited success since lack of aggressiveness on the part of the force at An Do and hesitancy to launch the dismounted attack at Bon Tri permitted large numbers of VC to escape under cover of darkness.

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Operation Binh Thuan 54

Binh Thuan 54 was a search and destroy operation conducted by the 44th Regional Force Battalion under sector control. The operation was initiated in reaction to a series of attacks and harassments by the VC near the city of Phan Thiet, on the southern coast of Binh Thuan Province.

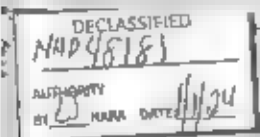
The 44th RF Battalion reinforced with an additional company and backed by a platoon of 105 mm howitzers comprised the friendly force. Only the 441st RF Company experienced any major contact.

The 441st encountered sniper fire at 1530 hours and decided to engage the enemy although it meant departing from a pre-planned series of objectives. As they reached a woodline, they came under heavy fire from what was believed to be a VC company. Pulling his forces together, the company commander attacked the point of heaviest contact with the V. C.

The action was so closely joined that it was considered infeasible to call for an air strike. Despite effective suppressive fire from the helicopters the VC left their positions and counter attacked with the RF unit. At this time, friendly forces called for the armed helicopters to fire on their own position. Two RF soldiers were wounded in this pass, but eight VC were observed to fall and one of the machine guns went out of action.

Results: Friendly losses were two KIA, four WIA, and two MIA; VC losses included 39 known KIA and two weapons captured.

MAGV Comment: "...The initiative displayed in departing from an



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unproductive axis of advance to orient on the enemy contributed greatly to the success of the operation. Responsive and effective air support (Army) prevented the unit from being overwhelmed and produced a high number of casualties among the VC...<sup>129.</sup>

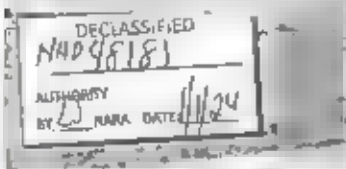
#### Air in Chuong Thien Province

An excellent example of the difference which air power made in the Vietnam fighting is afforded by a comparison of battles fought in Chuong Thien Province during the months of July 1964 and December 1964. In July, the pattern of operations against the Viet Cong did not take air into account nearly as much as they did in December. This was due to several reasons which will not be dealt with here but they included the lack of sufficient numbers of aircraft in Vietnam in July, the onset of the monsoon rains, and a tendency toward ground-oriented operations with emphasis upon helicopter support.

In December, this had changed. There were two squadrons of A-1E's and four A-1H squadrons available for combat, totalling about 100 aircraft. Also, there was a much greater willingness of ground commanders to call upon air.

Two major engagements were fought in Chuong Thien Province in IV Corps in July, in both of which government forces suffered heavy casualties. The first was on 11 July when three Regional Force companies were sent to relieve the Vinh Cheo Post ten kilometers south of Vi Thanh. The post had been attacked at 0100 hours by three VC companies using mortars and recoilless rifles at 0700 hours. Two

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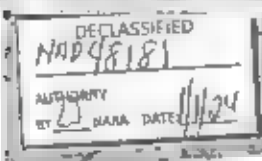
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companies moved abreast directly south through flooded rice paddies toward the post while the third company advanced southwest along the north bank of the Kinh Xang Canal. After traveling some seven kilometers, the two companies moving south were engaged with the 96th Main Force Battalion plus three Local Force companies. The ARVN company moving along the canal was diverted to help and two additional companies were committed shortly after. The reaction force was supported by seven VNAF/USAF close air support sorties and six Army AH-1B helicopters delivering suppressive fire. The choppers also<sup>130.</sup> were used for resupply of the besieged post with ammunition.

The reaction force made contact with the Viet Cong seven kilometers south of Vi Thanh and along the north bank of the canal. Heavy casualties resulted and one government company ceased to function as a unit. Fighting lasted throughout the day between 1500 and 1700 hours, four of the five companies withdrew, the other staying in place until relieved by an infantry battalion diverted from another operation nearby. Government forces suffered 58 killed in action, 76 missing in action or captured, and 72 wounded in action. One 60 mm mortar, a .30 caliber machine gun and five AN/PRC-10 radios were captured along with 110 individual weapons. While VC losses were considered heavy, mainly as the result of air and artillery, only<sup>131.</sup> five were confirmed KIA.

The reason for the heavy government casualties, according to MACV, were the superior size of the VC units and the limited training of the

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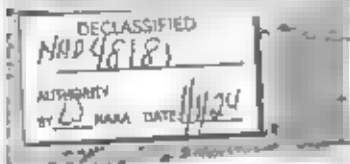
RF companies of the reaction force. The employment of only six air sorties on this operation must also have been a contributing factor.

In a very similar operation in the same area ten days later, government forces also suffered heavily. The fighting started with a VC night attack on the Xang Out outpost in the early morning hours of 21 July. At 0700 hours the 1st Battalion, 31st Regiment, moved west along Provincial Road 40 to join up with two Popular Forces companies coming from the opposite direction. The combined forces were then to team up to move upon and reinforce the Xang Out outpost. 133.

An O-1F with a U. S. and Vietnamese observer aboard flew over the area in front of the battalion but saw nothing suspicious even though a VC battalion was lying in wait. About ten kilometers west of Vi Thanh, the government battalion was ambushed by what was believed to be the VC T70 Battalion, augmented by two Local Force companies. The VC opened fire using machine guns and 60 mm and 81 mm mortars. Several platoon size VC elements attempted to knife through the three kilometer-long battalion column at different points to break it into isolated smaller units. As this sharp clash was taking place, the two RF companies, hearing the firing, moved toward the ambush site and were themselves taken under fire. Because of the extreme range of the action, the planned 105 mm artillery support could not be employed, being 12 kilometers away. 134.

A request for air support was made at 1030 hours immediately after the battalion was ambushed and one hour later, two VNAF A-1H's, on ground alert at Bien Hoa, were scrambled and airborne. Since the

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aircraft had to fly from Bien Hoa, about 130 miles away, they were not over the target until about 1220 hours when they conducted an air strike with no results determined. Two other air strikes were made later in the day, one by USAF A-1E aircraft. <sup>135.</sup> ~~135.~~

In this encounter, the government lost 41 killed, 56 wounded (including one US) and 31 missing in action (including one US). Also lost were three 60 mm mortars, two .30 caliber machine guns, nine AN/PRC-10 radios, one AN/GRC-9 radio, and 20 individual weapons. While enemy losses could not be confirmed, they were estimated at about 200, all of which were carried away. <sup>136.</sup>

Commenting on the action, MACV noted that the VC had extensive knowledge of the troop movements and selected an ambush point just out of range of artillery. Their expert camouflage eluded detection by the O-1F observation aircraft. Also, combat air support, having to come all the way from Bien Hoa, extended the reaction time. Although there was a field at Can Tho, no strike aircraft were being based there at the time.

In this action, as in most actions during this period, there were not enough strike aircraft on hand to allow for an airborne alert over the field of possible action. The 34th Tactical Group had 11 A-1E's operationally ready and the VNAF had only two squadrons of A-1H's assigned to its four tactical squadrons.

When the next significant engagement took place in Chuong Thien Province in December, possibly involving the same enemy units, the

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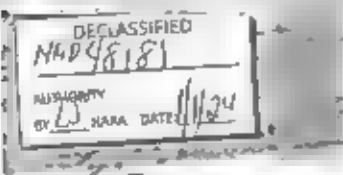
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results were different. The action occurred on 11 December and the pattern of VC activity was almost exactly the same as in the July actions. An outpost was attacked in the early morning hours and two Regional Forces were sent from Vi Thanh to reinforce it. The enemy, with a battalion and PF companies, and possibly aware of the government forces movements, was ready to spring an ambush against the reaction force. This time, however, the USAF PAC, Capt. Stanton Musser, flying alone in his C-1F after his Vietnamese observer refused to accompany him, spotted the enemy minutes before two government RF companies would have walked into the ambush. Also, on hand overhead was an alert airborne flight of USAF A-1E's ready to go into action when required. In addition, U. S. Army helicopters were also available in the area to respond to requests for air support. This flight of our A-1E's was called into action along with Army helicopters to break up the ambush site and in a battle that continued throughout the day, four other flights of A-1E's made strikes on the enemy units along with Army helicopters and two VNAF A-1H's. These aircraft, responding in minutes to the PAC's instructions, struck VC positions around the two companies and later, around a truck convoy that was ambushed and an A-1H that was shot down. The result was an estimated 500 enemy killed by air and perhaps, more important, according to ground commanders, the averting of disaster to the government forces on the ground.

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Friendly casualties in the 11 December action included 27 ARVN

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killed and 56 wounded along with two US killed and one US missing. MACV, however, termed the battle a qualified government success as the result of effective air support of the ambushed forces.<sup>138.</sup>

Close cooperation between US Army helicopters and USAF A-1E's was an important factor in the success of this action. A directive for employing helicopters and fixed wing aircraft to respond to ambushes such as those in Chuong Thien was effected in August after coordination between the 2nd Air Division and the US Army Support Command, Vietnam. Another contributing factor was the presence of aircraft in the combat area capable of responding within minutes to requests. Furthermore, in this one particular case, the USAF FAC happened to be alone and in radio communication with the fighters, a US Army officer on the ground and the radio control for the IV Corps area. The problem of language communications which often delayed responses when the VNAF observer was required to direct strikes, did not exist.

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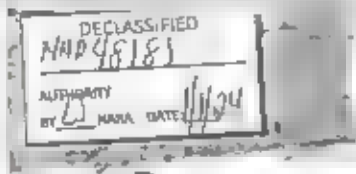
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STATUS OF THE 2ND AIR DIVISION 1964

The 2nd Air Division in December 1964 was involved in two related but separate air missions, one concerning the in-country war in Vietnam and the other concerned with out-of-country missions preparations for escalation. The in-country war was still being controlled from the Air Operations Center at Tan Son Nhut but a separate command post was set up at 2nd AD Headquarters on 9 Aug 64 to direct the out-of-country.

This situation was vastly different from what it was in January. The responsibilities of Major General Joseph H. Moore, 2nd AD commander, had increased sharply and suddenly after the 4 August Maddox destroyer incident in Tonkin Gulf. Additional aircraft, equipment, and people were rushed into the theater and new installations had to be hurriedly made ready to accommodate them. Contingency plans had to be drawn up, and units readied to carry them out. The increasing tempo of the counterinsurgency war against the Viet Cong demanded continued attention, particularly when viewed against the disintegrating political situation in Saigon. Security became a matter of pressing importance after the successful Viet Cong mortar attack on Bien Hoa on 1 November. General Moore's political responsibilities also rose when the Vietnamese Air Force commander, Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, emerged as a political figure after using VNAF power to smash an attempted coup d'etat on 13 September. The

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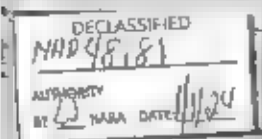
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marked rise in both USAF and VNAF aircraft strength, preparations for the use of new weapons such as the Mark 44 "Lazy Dog", CBU2, FC-47 and IR night bombing, and intensified air operations throughout Vietnam contributed to the vastly changed posture of the 2nd Air Division as it finished its third year in Vietnam.

There were several major changes in the complexion of the Viet Cong insurgency which profoundly affected the whole doctrine of counter-surgency on which U. S. plans were based. These emphasized the importance of the air role. First, there was mounting evidence of massive infiltration of hard core VC personnel and equipment from North Vietnam across the borders of Laos and by sea and waterway to coastal and river areas. This meant not only an improvement in the quality and quantity of the enemy soldier, but an enlarged potential for large scale fighting using several battalions in setpiece operations. Air attacks on communist supply routes both in Vietnam and in Laos were started in December and there was a stronger acceptance of the need for air attacks on North Vietnam. Furthermore, to support this increased force organized in battalions and regiments, the Viet Cong could no longer rely entirely on living off the land. Training areas, ammunition factories and arsenals, food storage depots, and communications centers were required and these provided important targets for air strikes and defoliation missions. Second, the Viet Cong was tightening the ring around Saigon and it soon became apparent that the countrywide Chien Thang pacification plan begun in February would

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have to take a secondary role to General Westmoreland's proposal in June for a plan for pacification outward in concentric circles from Saigon.  
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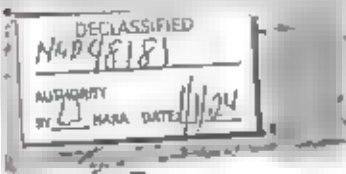
Thirdly, the Viet Cong had begun large scale attacks in the central provinces of II Corps such as the early December attack on An Lao and there were reports of large VC units throughout the II Corps area. This development dictated the employment of more strike aircraft in II Corps, which made up over half of the total land area of South Vietnam. Fourth, the Viet Cong in late 1964 had begun concentrating on attacks on Americans, shelling the Bien Hoa air base on 1 November and blowing up the Brink BOQ in Saigon on 24 December. This change in strategy lent increased strength to arguments for the use of air strikes against the Laos corridor routes and against North Vietnam itself.

Also in the latter half of 1964, it was becoming apparent that the non-military aspects of the counterinsurgency effort were not going well. The extension of VC control in the countryside and the bewildering political instability in Saigon and other big cities meant that more attention had to go to the military side of the struggle. With the results of ground fighting also below expectations, the role of air was becoming more and more crucial.

Fortunately, this changed pattern of the Vietnam and Thailand. Between June and December 1964, 48 highly effective A-1E Skyraiders had been deployed to the 34th Tactical Group at Bien Hoa as replacements for the B-26 and T-28 aircraft which were grounded in the spring

\*See History 2AD, Chap I, Jan-Jun 1964, pp 39

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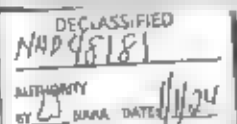
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following a series of wing failures. The Vietnamese Air Force striking power had been doubled in the same period, going from two to four A-1H squadrons. Also, as a result of the Tonkin Gulf incident on 4 August, a substantial number of jet aircraft were brought into Vietnam and Thailand. By the end of December there were 30 F-100's at Da Nang, ten B-57's at Bien Hoa, and 18 F-105's at Korat.

The total number of USAF aircraft in RVN increased from 117 in January to 221 in December while VNAF total strength rose from 219 to 280. In Thailand, where only a handful of aircraft were based at the beginning of the year, there were 85 aircraft in December. On-call for immediate deployment to RVN and Thailand bases were numerous other PACAF jet aircraft, which could be used for in-country as well as out-of-country operations. In addition to the increased air strength, there were major improvements in the Tactical Air Control System, particularly an increase in the number of ALO/FAC's assigned to the field and reduced air reaction times as a result of the implementation of the VNAF air request net. There was also a greater appreciation of the system by ground commanders who had doubled their requests for air in the last half of 1964. The first results of this improved air structure operating in the changed counterinsurgency environment became apparent at the end of 1964. From 1 November when the VC shelled Bien Hoa to 31 December when two VC battalions were engaged in a major setpiece action at Binh Gia, over 2500 Viet Cong were killed by air, more than were killed by air in the rest of the year. The number

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of strike sorties by USAF A-1E's rose from 276 in July to 612 in December. VNAF strike sorties jumped during the same period from 887 to 1262. The quantity of bombs and ammunition expended in December was at an all time high with about 2000 tons dropped on enemy concentrations, structures, and sampans.

There still existed, however, at the end of 1964, several limitations upon the effective employment of air. Despite the increase in USAF/VNAF aircraft strength in 1964, even more aircraft were required, strike planes as well as light liaison craft. Since mid-1964 only 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the number of requests for air were being honored. Although some progress was made in 1964, there were some problems in the area of US Army-US Air Force coordination of air activities with Army rotary wing and fixed wing aircraft still operating outside the Tactical Air Control System. However, the rapidly changing battlefield situation at the end of 1964 was pulling the US military effort into a more sophisticated level with US Air Force weapon systems and US Air Force professionalism playing an increasingly important role. The rules of engagement were slightly relaxed in 1964 but they still limited the effectiveness of the USAF. USAF C-123 and A-1E aircraft still had VNAF markings and VNAF forward air controllers were still required to mark targets. While some of these were self-imposed restrictions, they were being seriously reviewed at the end of the year. Despite vast improvement in its capability, the VNAF, partly because of the unsettled political

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situation in Saigon, was not getting full utilization out of its assigned aircraft, in the opinion of Air Force advisors. The sortie rate for strike aircraft for example, was consistently below that of the USAF strike planes.

Another frustrating damper on the counterinsurgency air effort was the continued influx of VC personnel and equipment into the country and the ability of the enemy to improve his anti-air capability and increase his area of action. From 1963 to 1964 the number of hard core Viet Cong increased from 22,900 to 32,500 and his control of the countryside had gone from 40 to 75 per cent.

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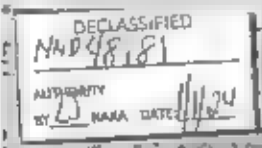
SUMMARY

The fierce fighting at the end of 1964 in which the Viet Cong on several occasions stood and fought for several days marked a new phase of the war in which tactical air could be more effectively employed. While the overall military and political situation in Vietnam was anything but bright, the VNAF and USAF at the end of the year were at their peak strength, flying six squadrons of A-1 Skyraiders out of bases throughout the country. The program to give the VNAF two more squadrons and the signs that the USAF in-country jet capability might be unleashed pointed to a greater USAF/VNAF participation in the conflict. The Tactical Air Control System, while still short of FAC's and observation planes, had made substantial strides in 1964, particularly with the initiation of the VNAF Air Request Net for immediate air requests.

There were setbacks such as the loss of aircraft at Bien Hoa during the 1 November mortar attack by the VC and the shooting down of several Skyraiders during a short period in August and September. Also, the indecision and vacillation over the USAF/VNAF requirement for observation aircraft typified by the 19th TASS deactivation and reactivation in the period set the program back somewhat.

At the end of the year, while some of the rules of engagement had been relaxed, others such as the need for Vietnamese observers on O-1F's remained.

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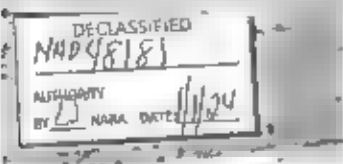
The U. S. jet capability, F-100's at Danang and B-57's at Bien Hoa, was still on the leash in December although there was a crying need for extra tactical air, particularly in the two most northerly Corps areas. Perhaps of greatest significance, at the end of 1964, more than half of all the U. S. aircraft in Vietnam were still not under the Tactical Control System.

In total, however, the gains in tactical air outweighed the setbacks and there were numerous indications that an increased appreciation of tactical air would allow for greater use of this capability in 1965.

This chapter has not covered the full spectrum of USAF operations during the period. Operations of the 315th Troop Carrier Group, for example, have been generally passed over. These are written in the group's history.

The role of the 2nd Air Division in support of T-28 operations in Laos, in interdiction strikes against targets in the Laotian Panhandle, and Yankee Team operations are covered in separate studies.

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G L O S S A R Y

AA	Anti-Aircraft
ACS	Air Commando Squadron
AFTU	Air Force Test Unit
ALO	Air Liaison Officer
AOC	Air Operations Center
BAR	Browning Automatic Rifle
CBU	Cluster Bomb Unit
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group
CRC	Control and Reporting Center
CRP	Control and Reporting Post
CP	Command Post
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
DOD	Department of Defense
FAC	Forward Air Controller
IR	Infra-Red
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JRATA	Joint Research and Test Activity
KIA	Killed by Air Killed in Action
LD	Landing Drop
LZ	Landing Zone
MIA	Missing in Action
OR	Operational Ready
RF	Regional Forces
TOC	Tactical Operations Center
USASCV	United States Army Support Command, Vietnam
US STRICOM	U. S. Strike Command
WIA	Wounded in Action.

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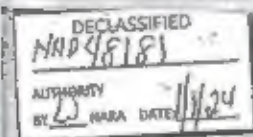
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15. (S) MACV Mil Rep MAC J3 12964, 020945Z/ Nov 64.
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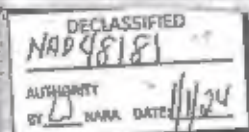


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43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. 2nd AD Command Briefing, Jan 1965. The figures on KBA for 1964 were as of 7 January and conceivably could be higher as delayed results came in.
47. Figures obtained from machine run data on aircraft statistics for 1964, compiled by 2nd AD Operations Analysis and 2nd AD Comptroller, Feb 1965.
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